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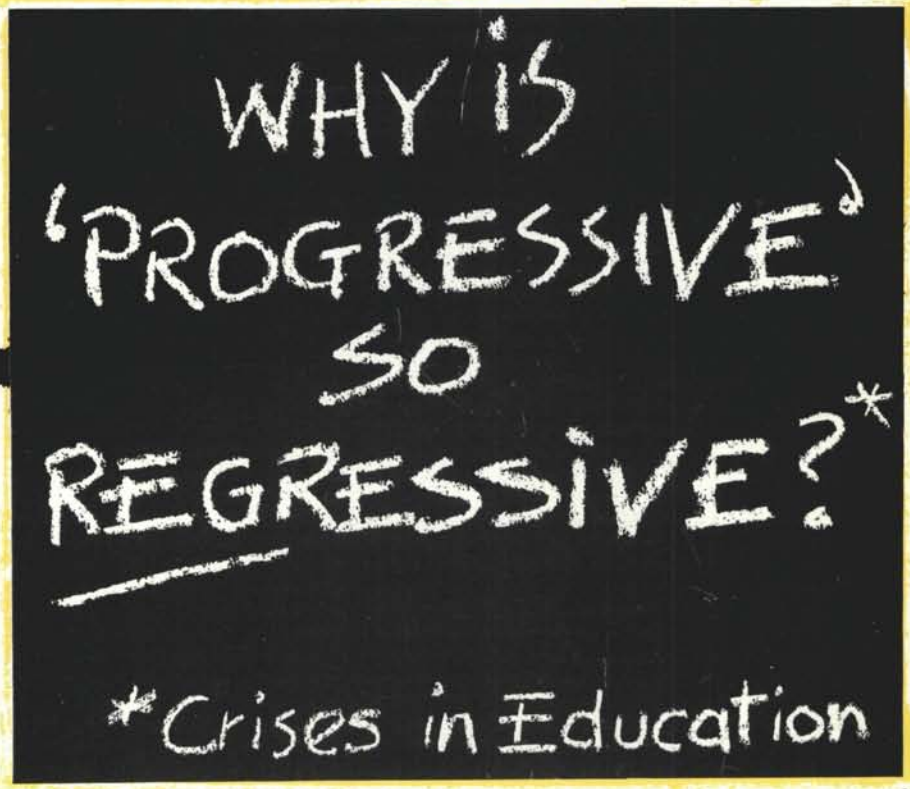

Galina Vishnevskaya & George Urban: a conversation (II)

Melvin J. Lasky Strangers in a Promised Land

SPECIAL BOOK SECTION: STAGE & SCREEN

JOHN WEIGHTMAN MICHAEL BILLINGTON JEFFREY RICHARDS

With articles by **Laurence Kitchin** on John Gielgud

& **Edward Rogerson** on Polish Cinema

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They said the best place for us was behind bars.

There we were, quietly going about our business in sunny Rickmansworth, when the phone rang:

"Your next big job will have you all behind bars," said a mysterious voice.

"Bars?" we gulped.

"Bar codes" came the reply.

We pressed for more information.

It transpired that our associates in Japan had developed a sophisticated electronic point-of-sale system that used a 'holographic laser scanner' to make sense of all those black and white lines you see on most of the products in shops.

With a flick of the wrist, this system would give an itemised print-out to the customer, display the product's name and price at the checkout and then relay the information to the head office and the stock room, so that management were aware of sales figures and shelves were kept full.

We were told that our mission (should we wish to accept it) was to make the system more simple, more portable, more flexible and truly international. Which is a bit like asking someone to nail a jelly to the ceiling.

As we enjoy a challenge, our experienced software engineers soon found themselves designing the tools to enable the integration of application software (that of others, as well as our own) and the use of spreadsheets and databases, thereby making it possible for users to set up an interface with their existing software.

While doing all this, they somehow found time to write a quarter of a million lines of program in 'C' language.

By July, we felt confident enough to run the results of our labours before the discerning eye of a senior executive from Japan. She admitted to being pleasantly surprised. (We admit to being secretly chuffed.)

You may be wondering why a multinational company should choose a UK operation for this task.

The answer does not lie in industrial nepotism or philanthropic ideals.

It's because the UK leads the world in innovative software skills.

If we hadn't been up to the task, the job would have gone elsewhere.

But retail automation isn't our only area of development expertise in the UK.

We are involved in building new systems and products in computer software, satellite communications, mobile radio, customised semi-conductors and factory automation. All as innovative as our work behind bars.

Which just goes to show: there's quite a bit more happening in Rickmansworth than meets the eye.

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Doing rather well in Rickmansworth.

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A cross-section of our growth, past, present and future.

May we ask you a couple of questions?

One. Which do you think is the most useful invention of the past hundred years or so?

Two. Which do you think will grow fastest in the next fifty?

You're bound to consider the internal combustion engine, the aeroplane, atomic energy and the microchip, of course. But how about telecommunications?

You have to admit there's a case to be made for them, and it's timely to make it now.

It'll take a short history lesson but we promise to make it as painless as possible.

1866, the Entrepreneur.

The founder of Cable and Wireless was a rather vigorous and determined entrepreneur called John Pender.

In 1866 he was responsible for laying the first transatlantic submarine cable.

With the dots and dashes of the Morse Code, it meant the United Kingdom was only a few minutes away from the eastern seaboard of the United States (Stock Exchange and Wall Street closing prices were transmitted daily).

By the end of the century he'd created a submarine cable empire that virtually covered the world and stretched for fifty thousand miles.

Unending success beckoned? Not exactly.

1920's, the Italian.

A young Italian scientist called Marconi had earlier patented his radio device and now offered a transatlantic telegraph service (the one which brought Crippen to trial).

It was three times faster than cable at about one twentieth of the cost.

Marconi made the British government an offer they couldn't refuse: that his telegraph service and our cable assets be merged.

It was a happy marriage which, helped by the new technology, prospered even during the depressed thirties.

1950's, the voice.

Then in the mid 1950's the first coaxial cable was laid across the Atlantic, carrying distant voices. (Though you still had to queue-up to make a call.)

But the pace of innovation was quickening.

Rockets placed satellites in space, to and from which we bounce messages on 44,000 mile journeys between our earth stations round the world.

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Next came larger coaxials, then the miraculous fibre-optic cable carrying voice and data at the speed of light (the entire Encyclopaedia Britannica in a flash).

Now, computers and microwaves all play their part, but our real growth as a company has accelerated in the past four years.

1981, the new freedom.

In 1981 the government privatised us in its belief that companies flourish when managers are free to act in an entrepreneurial spirit (shades of John Pender).

We are proud to say we have repaid its trust.

Mid-1980's, the explosion.

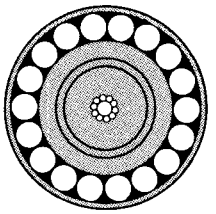
There's nothing new in people's urge to communicate of course. But as international business has grown, this urge has now assumed unprecedented proportions.

Just about every country in the world is expanding and updating its telecommunications. And new technology is constantly needed to make systems faster, cheaper and more effective over greater distances.

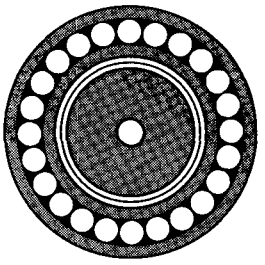
Currently in fact, we're improving and maintaining systems in some thirty-six countries.

In Hong Kong we operate both its internal and external telecommunications systems.

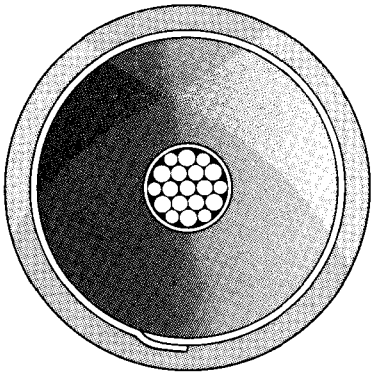
During 1985 we agreed with China to study together the feasibility of establishing up-to-date telecommunications between the main cities of the Yangtze Delta.



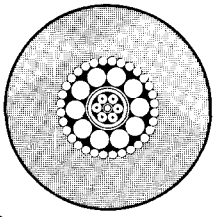
1866. First successful transatlantic cable. Roughly six months to transmit the Bible by Morse Code.



1956. First coaxial cable across the Atlantic. Thirty-six circuits bring phone calls as we know them today.



1974. Over 1,800 circuits – queuing eliminated.



1989. Cable and Wireless' fibre-optic cable to America. 12,000 circuits able to transmit the Encyclopaedia Britannica in a few zips of light.

Meanwhile, in America we've laid fibre-optic cable along the railroad from Dallas to Houston and we are operating circuits from New York to Washington and soon, Chicago.

In Barbados we are co-operating with the government to bring the latest digital communications to the island and help its main industry, tourism.

In Bahrain, we have a 40% stake in one of the most advanced telecommunications services in the Middle East and we manage the entire system.

While in 1984, our ships laid a submarine cable linking Australia and New Zealand with Canada via Fiji and Hawaii – eight thousand miles in all.

The long-term view.

We hope we have shown how Cable and Wireless has grown bigger as the world, in communication terms, has grown smaller.

However, if you would like to know more, write to the Press Office, Cable and Wireless plc, Mercury House, Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8RX.

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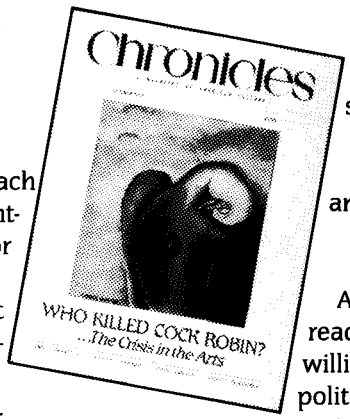

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Geoffrey Partington

The Disorientation of Western Education

When Progress Means Regress

I TAKE "progressivism" in education in a rather broad sense to mean the idea that desirable ends in education are both identifiable and capable of being, if not fully realised, at least more nearly attained than in the past or in the present. I place the many groups or individuals who fall within this wide definition of "progressives" into four main divisions.

The first of these groups are "Child-Centred Progressives", who conceive progress in terms of each child being more fully enabled by education to develop individual interests and potentialities authentically and without constraints. The second are "Radical Progressives", whom I define as judging education by the extent to which it succeeds in promoting a basic reconstruction of society. The third are "Instrumental Progressives", whose central concern is to make education increasingly more efficient in serving what they see as the economic, political, or cultural needs of their own society. The fourth group are the "Liberal Progressives", whose central concern is with the fuller initiation of ever larger proportions of children into liberal knowledge; that is, knowledge with claims to be valuable, independently of children's felt interests or of what is deemed needful for the emergence of "a new society" or for "the greater efficiency" of one now existing.

These four groups are not entirely watertight—many individuals are attracted to the distinctive ideas of more than one group—but they are far from arbitrary, and like all "ideal types" appear to have heuristic value.

1. "Child-Centred Progressives"

THE INNER CONTRADICTIONS within child-centred progressivism have often been fully and convincingly exposed.[1] Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and their modern successors all claimed that they were setting children free from the conventional restraints imposed by traditional pedagogies of an arbitrary character. Each distinctive child-centred educational theory possesses its own specific recommendations; but none of them is willing to admit that its own theories are highly prescriptive. Typically they have appealed to allegedly scientific or natural laws which, once clearly discerned, would enable the progressive educator to realise in a non-interventionist way the inner potentialities of each child.

Behind both the "growth" metaphor dear to Froebel and the language of fulfilling "needs" and "potentialities" favoured by their contemporary successors, there lies a constant effort to derive *ought* from *is*, purposes from facts. If, and when, children expressed desires which conflicted with what was thought good for their growth, needful for the development of their true potentialities, or conducive to the satisfaction of their true needs (as distinct from their subjective wants), classical child-centred theorists were little slower to intervene than were the traditionalist pedagogues whom they repudiated. The Froebelians, for example, have always been zealous in acting to prevent "stunting" or "warping" or "clogging with weeds" from interfering with the "natural" growth or "blossoming" of the flower-like children of the kindergarten.

The main body of child-centred progressivism is indeed open to charges that its claims to regard children as the arbiters of their own educational interests are merely rhetorical. Rousseau's "will of all", with its totalitarian implications, tended to overshadow his egalitarian "will of each". Most child-centred progressivists who have themselves run schools have been imposing, if not charismatic,[2] individuals

---

[1] Robert Dearden, *Philosophy of Primary Education* (1968); Dearden, Peters, and Hirst (eds), *Education and the Development of Reason* (1975); G. H. Bantock, *Studies in the History of Educational Theory* (2 vols, 1980, 1983).

[2] For charismatic child-centred progressives see R. J. W. Selleck, *English Primary Education and the Progressives* (1972); Robert Skidelsky, *English Progressive Schools* (1969); W. A. C. Stewart, *The Educational Innovators* (1968).

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who impressed their personalities on their charges much more deeply than did the average traditionalist teacher. Edmund Holmes, the main originator of child-centred progressivism in state schools in England and Wales, once blithely declared: "Let the end of the process of growth be what it may, our business is to grow. . . ." But he was as quick in later as in earlier life (when he had been Chief Inspector of Elementary Schools) to prompt, to suggest, even to intervene, when he thought children or teachers were in error.

SUCH LEADING contemporary British educational thinkers as Professors Robert Dearden and G. H. Bantock are, then, entirely justified in laying charges of inconsistency and indeed of basic contradiction against the central ideas of child-centred progressivism. It is true, too, that many child-centred reformers sought to make their own proposals more attractive by unfairly caricaturing past and existing schools and their methods. Edmund Holmes, for example, declared in *What Is and What Might Be* (1911): "Blind, passive, literal, unintelligent obedience is the basis on which the whole system of Western education has been reared."

Yet teaching usually has been, and commonly still is, an unnecessarily stodgy, directive, and ossified business. Reformed methods may degenerate too into mechanical mindlessness once they become institutionalised. It came as a shock to me when I realised that the regimented classroom in Coketown, the opening scene of Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854), was modelled on Pestalozzi's "object lesson". In my own visits to schools I have noted that boredom or inertia may be found as often in lessons supposedly based on children's own interests and experiences as in those directed by an expository teacher.

Although many classical child-centred progressivists deceived themselves when they claimed to be basing their teaching on children's judgments of what constituted their needs and interests, their pedagogy was often a very good combination of "teacher direction and public activity". Pestalozzi's objects, Froebel's gifts and occupations, Montessori's structural apparatus, Piaget's models, Dienes's blocks (and the like) were all justified by their creators in terms of encouraging internal development or autonomy. But they were so constituted as to form a part, if not the whole, of highly defensible learning strategies. Much graver problems arose when, after criticising their predecessors for inconsistency, schools were opened by more consistent child-centred progressives such as A. S. Neill.

Neill was sensible of the limitations inherent in the "learning by doing" emphasis of some Montessorians and of many of John Dewey's disciples. He realised that "when little Willie asks why rabbits have white tails the learning by doing business breaks down." In almost every other respect, however, Neill's influence was deeply destructive. He denounced Montessori because "she has a definite idea of right and wrong", whereas, he held, for a child to accept a "ready-made code of morals is dangerous". Indeed to Neill "the first thing a child should learn is to be a rebel". Repudiation by children of other forms of traditional knowledge did not worry Neill one whit: he maintained, against all statistical evidence:

> "We have found that the boy who cannot or will not learn to read until he is—say—fifteen, is always a mechanical boy who later on becomes a good engineer or electrician."[3]

Schools such as A. S. Neill's Summerhill were fortunately few and far between, and their high fees ensured that they were patronised mainly by the more Bohemian members of the intelligentsia, who might be able (as working-class parents clearly were not) to create new opportunities for learning or for employment for illiterate fifteen-year-old sons or daughters. Yet nine books of Neill's were published between 1920 and 1967, most of which appeared on reading lists in teacher-training courses. His influence helped pave the way for the growth within state schools in Britain of a far less structured pedagogy than that generated by the Froebelians or Montessorians.

"LEARNING READINESS" was always potentially a dangerous doctrine, but the typical child-centred progressive teacher in British schools in the 1950s and 1960s stimulated readiness by creating a highly positive learning environment directed to well-conceived outcomes taken to embody growth, need, or interest. During the 1960s, however, the leadership of child-centred methodologies was increasingly seized by such figures as John Holt and Carl Rogers in the United States and Charity James and Michael Duane in Britain, who dismissed all forms of directive teaching as "indoctrinative" and "restrictive". Their ideas became highly influential in teacher training and in educational discussions in the mass media.[4]

In this new atmosphere the "open-ended project" tended to replace the structured lesson, while the teacher was transformed into "a resources-person". The newer versions of "discovery methods" lacked the structure of earlier Froebelian or Montessorian approaches. "Inquiry" became a seductive label for the promotion of unmethodological methodologies. Claims were too readily accepted that the sequence and pace of learning lies, or ought to lie, exclusively within the learner, and either cannot or ought not to be postulated by the educator. Children were to negotiate with their teachers as to when, where, and how any inquiry was to proceed.

Emphasis on the educational value of "children's own experiences" easily slipped into the doctrine that educational relevance could be determined by whether an interest to acquire any given knowledge or skills arose from such direct experience. As with other new manifestations of child-centredness, this emphasis had the unintended effect of widening gaps between children whose homes were charac-

[3] A. S. Neill, *A Dominie in Doubt* (1920), pp. 105, 148, 65; *The Free Child* (1953), p. 35.

[4] See John Holt, *How Children Fail* (1964); Carl Rogers, *Freedom to Learn* (1969); Charity James, *Young Lives at Stake: A Reappraisal of Secondary Schools* (1968); Leila Berg, *Risinghill: Death of a Comprehensive School* (Penguin, 1968).

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terised by a wide variety of educationally valuable activities . . . and the rest.

The most pervasive experience-based pedagogy in the English-speaking world in recent years has been "Values Clarification" (developed in the US by Louis Raths and Sidney Simon). Education departments as well as many individual teachers were persuaded that their methods would open up to harmonious discussion the full range of moral questions previously avoided as fiercely controversial or dealt with *ex cathedra*. Raths and Simon offered for children "a process for clarifying and developing values—a process they can use all their lives." The teacher was to avoid "moralising, criticising, giving values or evaluating" and to concentrate simply on helping children to clarify their own values: thus charges of indoctrination and of censorship could apparently be resisted, even though more intimate experiences and more personal reflections would be elicited from children than in the past.

On the face of it this approach seemed, whether for good or ill, to be highly individualistic or even anarchistic. Raths and his colleagues rather coyly admitted:

> "When operating within this value theory, it is entirely possible that children will choose not to develop values. It is the teacher's responsibility to support this choice also."[5]

In practice, however, the emphasis within Values Clarification on the revelation or sharing of personal experience made children much more vulnerable to peer-group pressure; so that as well as wearing the same brand of jeans and buying the same pop records, they also adopted standardised generational opinions. In addition, the self-revelation techniques adapted from "encounter groups" and "sensitivity training" opened children up to a more radical reorientation of their values than even the most aggressively indoctrinative pedagogies had previously achieved.

Despite disclaimers, Values-Clarifiers applied a substantive set of moral and quasi-political judgments. They rejected as regressive and repressive any values related to "my station and its duties". Sidney and Marianne Simon urged frankly during an attack (in *Colloquy*, May 1978) on the limited treatment traditionally given to sexuality in American education:

> "Some changes are desperately needed. Schools can no longer be permitted to carry out such a horrendously effective programme for drying up students' sense of their own sexual identity. The schools must not be allowed to continue fostering the immorality of morality. An entirely different set of values must be nourished. . . ."

In the first stage of a two-stage operation the Values-Clarifiers (and to a lesser extent Lawrence Kohlberg[6] and his disciples in the "Cognitive Moral Development" movement) advanced an unconditional moral relativism under liberal colours. Children were assured that there can in principle be no "right" answers to questions about what we ought to do, and that all opinions or values or actions may well be of equal worth. During this stage it is suggested to parents that schools ought to reflect outside society, and that if a life-style is practised in a community it surely has every right to equal expression in the classroom.

Once traditional values and inhibitions have been undermined, a second stage is started in which children are presented with a complete set of new values of an apparently absolute and universal character, often recommended as a panacea for combating racism and sexism—together with a host of evidently clear and unambiguous evils very closely associated with Western societies and governments but rarely found in the Third World or in the Eastern bloc.

The range of questions put to children by "Values-Clarifiers" is certainly wide. Examples include:

> What does your mother do? Does she like it? Is she home a lot? (p. 155, VC[7])
>
> What disturbs you most about your parents? Describe one of the people in your family in two sentences. (p. 148, VC)
>
> How many of you would like to have had different parents? (p. 43, VC)
>
> Would you bring up your children differently from the way you are being brought up? How and why? (p. 172, VT)
>
> How many of you have a communication problem with your parents? (p. 49, VC)
>
> Reveal who in your family brings you the greatest sadness, and why. (p. 181, VC)
>
> How many of you think that parents should teach their children to masturbate? (p. 52, VC)
>
> Tell some ways in which you will be a better parent than yours are now. (p. 181, VC)
>
> How many of you would like to have a secret lover? (p. 46, VC)
>
> List all the people you've been in love with. (p. 240, VC)
>
> How did you first learn to kiss? (p. 238, VC)
>
> Recall the last ten times you have cried. What was each about? (p. 239, VC)
>
> Is there something that you once did that you are ashamed of? (p. 154, VC)
>
> What was your saddest moment in the last year? (p. 72, MVC)
>
> The subject I would be most reluctant to discuss here is. . . . (p. 246, VC)

[5] Louis Raths, Merrill Harmin, and Sidney Simon, *Values and Teaching* (1966), p. 48.

[6] Lawrence Kohlberg, *Collected Papers on Moral Development and Moral Education* (Harvard University Press, 1973).

[7] Abbreviations refer to the following:

VC: Sidney Simon *et al.*, *Values Clarification* (Hart Publishing, 1972).

VT: Louis Raths, Merrill Harmin, and Sidney Simon, *Values and Teaching* (1966).

MVC: Sidney Simon and James Clark, *More Values Clarification* (Pennant Press, 1975).

HYC: Sidney Simon, *Helping Your Child Learn Right from Wrong: A Guide to Values Clarification* (McGraw-Hill, 1977).

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You are a 15-year-old boy sitting with your 14-year-old girl-friend in her home. Just sitting next to her gets you sexually aroused. What do you do?

—kiss her goodnight and go home and masturbate.

—neck and pet with her and ask her to masturbate you.

—have sexual intercourse.

—suggest that the two of you do something active like going for a walk or a bike ride. (p. 216, HYC)

Many other educational theorists in the English-speaking world have employed child-centred language in the pursuit of ends more overtly political than those admitted by the Values-Clarifiers. In an attempt to refute the notion of cultural deprivation Neil Keddie wrote: ". . . all so-called minority group cultures may be seen as adequate in their own right", since "every way of life has its own validity." Neil Postman—a recent convert to more traditionalist values—doubted the value of stimulating reading readiness, since literacy (he feared) tended "to make students accessible to political and historical myth."

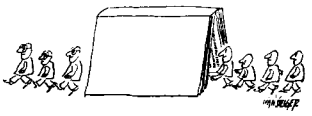
LANGUAGE MASTERY, always fundamental in educational argument and practice, was vitiated in many English-speaking countries by anxieties about "group relativities" and particularly about race relations. William Labov argued both that the language of the black slum was typically more vigorous and flexible than that of the middle-class suburb, and that all linguistic modes were equally valuable.[8] On neither argument was there any case for seeking to alter the speech pattern of black slum-dwellers. In Australia an increasing number of *soi-disant* experts in Aboriginal education have endorsed (with Eve Fesl) the opinion that:

". . . the written word, though holding much of interest for Anglo-Australians, contains little of relevance to Aborigines and their life-style."[9]

In Britain there is continuing tension between attempts to help black British children to speak standard English as well as possible and efforts to preserve forms of dialect and patois in their authentic and original purity.

With the consideration of such lines of argument we are straining against the bounds of child-centred progressivism, however broadly the concept may be defined. I turn now to a consideration of more thoroughgoing militancy.

2. *"Radical Progressives"*



Over the last twenty years Radical Progressivism has exerted enormous influence on Western education, although unevenly, with Scandinavia and the English-speaking countries in the vanguard.

This burgeoning influence was preceded (and perhaps stimulated) by a huge expansion in educational provision, supported by adherents of all four of our brands of educational progressivism. The areas of expansion included higher school-leaving ages; increased places in universities, polytechnics, and the like; higher qualifications for teachers; improved pupil-teacher ratios; more advanced laboratory and workshop facilities. In the period of massive expansion there was an unprecedented willingness to undertake radical modes of reorganisation, including the ending (or at least the sharp reduction) of academic selection both between and within educational institutions; the abolition or sharp curtailment of external examinations; persistent attacks on all concepts of "hierarchy in knowledge"; and the elevation of learners as competent participants in educational decision-making.

Many of these radical changes were resisted, usually unsuccessfully, by instrumental and liberal progressives, while child-centred progressives were usually (though far from invariably) in support.

Radical progressives themselves find it particularly hard, however, to evaluate the results of the changes they succeeded in promoting. On the one hand, they seek to defend their institutions and methods against odious comparison with those preceding them or even managing to coexist uneasily with them. Baroness Cox and John Marks in Britain have been engaged in lengthy dispute[10] with radical progressives over the comparable academic results achieved by comprehensive and by academically-selected schools. On the other hand, most radical progressives not only agree that the changes they wrought have not reduced educational disparities between various hypostatised groups, such as girls against boys, blacks as against whites, workers as against non-workers, but complain loudly that such disparities have indeed widened.

It is, of course, true that proportionally greater advantage of the expansion of places in higher education was taken by the "middle class" rather than by the "working class". However, the correlation is by no means linked closely to income. Protestant clergymen earn far less than car salesmen, and teachers less than print-workers. But the lower earners in

[8] Neil Keddie, "Introduction", Neil Postman, "The Politics of Reading", William Labov, "The Logic of Non-Standard English", in Neil Keddie (ed.), *Tinker, Tailor . . . The Myth of Culturla Deprivation* (Penguin, 1973).

Neil Postman's earlier work (especially his *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*) rejecting structure in education still remains on hundreds of reading lists in teacher-training courses. His later and much more sensible work is almost completely ignored. Like Ivan Illich and Herbert Marcuse, Postman once held that television and advanced visual technology would enable children (or adults) to plug into a range of instructional courses at will, so that the pursuit of literacy in school was not too important. Unlike Illich and Marcuse, Postman came to realise that such an electronic network, if used by the illiterate or semi-illiterate, was an ideal agency for indoctrination, and he completely changed his position.

[9] Eve Fesl, "The Irrelevancy of Literacy: Why Aborigines Reject White Progress", in *Education News* (Canberra Commonwealth Department of Education, 1983), p. 14.

[10] See John Marks, Caroline Cox, Maciej Pomian-Srzednicki, *Standards in English Schools* (National Council for Educational Standards, 1983); Marks and Pomian-Srzednicki, *Standards in English Schools: Second Report* (NCES, 1985).

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these two pairs have on average a much higher commitment to education, and to literacy and scientific culture, than the higher earners; and this proves highly influential in their children's priorities and desires. The homely saw about leading a horse to water has been entirely neglected by an energetic faction among radical progressives, the sociologists of education. Led by Professor A. H. Halsey of Oxford University, this determined band spends much of its professional life in producing statistical tables which show that educational achievement is not equally distributed between different groups; and in drawing, without further argument, the radical conclusion that these differences demonstrate not merely *prima facie* but final evidence of unfair discrimination.[11]

RADICAL PROGRESSIVES are sometimes divided into two groups on the general basis of whether they are mainly concerned with promoting major change *within* liberal-democratic states with free- or social-market or mixed economies or with their *replacement*. In Education this difference in political perspective has little purchase in the contemporary West. A much more vital distinction, educationally, is between those radical progressives who believe that significantly worthwhile educational advances can be gained in "capitalist" societies and those who hold that this is impossible or at best very unlikely—a distinction with close affinities to that sometimes made between "traditional Marxists" and "neo-Marxists".

Given the importance of Marxism in some form or another to radical progressivism in the West, a brief consideration of some of its educational doctrines is not unduly digressive. For Marx and Engels bequeathed an ambiguous set of answers to the basic questions of whether objective knowledge is possible and of whether, or to what extent, in class societies knowledge is necessarily perverted by ideology.

Marx and Engels introduced or popularised three distinct meanings for the abstract noun "ideology". Their first usage was merely as a synonym for a set of ideas, which may be organised at varying levels of cohesiveness or explicitness. We all in this sense happily admit to having an ideology, since "Ideology One" is non-pejorative. Their other two usages, both pejorative, involve the concept of "false consciousness" or a mistaken set of ideas. We ourselves, in these senses, are *never* "ideological" in our thinking. *Other* people are; but *we* have true beliefs or justified principles (since, presumably, if we thought them untrue or lacking justification we should not hold them).

The two pejorative usages are distinguished from each other in terms of intent. "Ideology Two" is unintentional, although it may be both partial and self-interested in the case of members of ruling classes or dominant groups. Engels defined "Ideology Two" as:

> ". . . a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, indeed, but with false consciousness. The real motive impelling him remains unknown to him, otherwise it would not be an ideological process at all . . . he works with mere thought-material which he accepts without examination as the product of thought."[12]

On the other hand, both Marx and Engels, especially when engaged in polemic, attributed bad faith to their opponents—and such conscious dishonesty in promoting ideas may be termed "Ideology Three".

The failure of the British and other proletariats in the second half of the 19th century to express correct proletarian consciousness led Marx and Engels to elaborate "Ideology Two", in the form that the ruling ideas in any age are those of the ruling classes, as a complement to their basic principle that actual experience of oppression and exploitation in capitalist society would inevitably lead the proletariat to adopt revolutionary beliefs. None the less, Marx and Engels did not fear that the positive sciences which were advancing so rapidly at this period were vitiated by Ideologies Two and Three simply by having their origins in a capitalist society. Indeed the system of "Dialectical Materialism", which then became virtually identified with Marxism, was very sharply opposed to the "relativistic" and "subjectivist" tendencies immanent in the doctrine of the "ruling ideas".

CONTEMPORARY Western neo-Marxisms are, in contrast, suffused with subjectivism and unconditional relativism. Michael F. D. Young, Alun Blum, Geoffrey Esland, Kevin Harris, Michael Matthews, Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Katz and Michael Apple are among the neo-Marxists who have elevated to an unconscionable degree the supposed explanatory power of the "ruling ideas" thesis. The main theoretician who has given some cohesion to these positions is Louis Althusser with his postulate of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA).

The materialist and objectivist epistemology of traditional Marxism, of Marx and Engels, of Lenin and Krupskaya, and of Gramsci, did not judge the knowledge and culture developed in capitalist society to be ideologically corrupted by that very fact. On the contrary, the main criticism made by traditional Marxists was that such culture and knowledge were insufficiently disseminated among the masses. Lenin replied to the advocates of *Proletcult* by declaring:

> "Proletarian culture must be the result of the natural development of the stores of knowledge which mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist society, landlord society, and bureaucratic society. . . . Marxism won for itself world-historical significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat by the fact that it did not cast aside the valuable gains of the bourgeois epoch, but

[11] See James Murphy, "Disparity and Inequality in Education: the Crippling Legacy of Coleman", in *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 2 (1981), pp. 62-70; and his "Education and Equality: The Professional Ideology of the Educational Pathologist", in *Educational Studies* 4 (1978).

[12] Friedrich Engels, Letter 117 (to Franz Mehring), 14 July 1893, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence, 1846-1895* (tr Torr, 1942), p. 511.

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on the contrary assimilated and digested all that was valuable in more than 2,000 years of development of human thought and culture."

In a similar vein Lenin also declared:

> ". . . the tuition, training and education of the young must be based on the material that was bequeathed to us by the old society. We can build communism only on the sum of knowledge, organisation and institutions, only on the stock . . . of means left to us by the old society. . . . You would be committing a great mistake if you attempted to draw the conclusion that one can become a communist without acquiring what human knowledge has accumulated."[13]

Lenin did not advocate the uncritical acceptance of received wisdom, or deny that forms of knowledge may be distorted or perverted within a particular state; but, by and large, he urged that inherited culture should be reworked rather than rejected. Gramsci agreed with Lenin that both before and after the Revolution the traditional culture of the school and its disciplines should predominate over the everyday commonsensical understandings of the child, particularly of peasant or *lumpenproletarian* children whose thinking was most likely to be flawed by error and superstition.

I HAVE ON OCCASION played a rather mean trick on academic neo-Marxists in Britain and Australia by presenting to them as my very own some of Gramsci's pronouncements on education. The immediate response has usually been to denounce them as "reactionary" or (a nice touch for Gramsci) as "fascist". Here is Gramsci, then, on language:

> "If it is true that every language contains the elements of a conception of the world and of a culture, it could also be true that from anyone's language one can assess the greater or lesser complexity of his conception of the world. Someone who only speaks dialect, or understands the standard language incompletely, necessarily has an intuition of the world which is more or less limited and provincial, which is fossilised and anachronistic in relation to the major currents of thought which dominate world history. His interest will be limited, not universal; it is at least necessary to learn the national language properly. A great culture can be translated into any language with historic richness and complexity, and it can translate any other great culture, and can be a world-wide means of expression. But a dialect cannot do this."[14]

Not much comfort there for neo-Marxist radical progressives who deplore past efforts, now unfortunately abandoned, "to standardise the children's language . . . an upper class dialect was honoured and codified through the examination system as correct English".[15] Even more disturbing for both child-centred and new-wave radical progressives are Gramsci's sentiments on the place of hard work and discipline in education:

> "In education one is dealing with children in whom one has to inculcate certain habits of diligence, precision, poise (even physical poise), ability to concentrate upon specific subjects, which cannot be acquired without the mechanical repetition of disciplined and methodical acts . . . it is also true that it will always be an effort to learn physical self-discipline and self-control; the pupil has in effect to undergo a psychophysical training. Many people have to be persuaded that studying too is a job, and a very tiring one, with its own peculiar apprenticeship—involving muscles and nerves as well as intellect. It is a process of adaptation, a habit acquired with effort, tedium and even suffering. If one wishes to produce scholars, one has to start at this point and apply pressure *throughout the educational system* in order to succeed in creating those thousands or hundreds or only dozens of scholars of the highest quality which are necessary to every great civilisation."[16]

THREE CONTRADICTIONS currently threaten all modes of radical progressivism, but particularly those of neo-Marxist rather than traditional Marxist tendency. One concerns the relationship between education and cultural contexts; the second, the status of differing occupations and ways of life; and the third, the status and value of knowledge.

The essence of the first contradiction is between radical demands that education be fully "democratised", which means here an abolition of distinctions within education, and the belief that the external structure of capitalist society is such that no changes within schools or educational institutions are likely to have more than cosmetic effect.

The distinctions to be abolished are of different kinds. "Bussing" in the US aimed at greater uniformity in the proportions of various racial groups in schools and classrooms. Single-sex schools were denounced as seedbeds of female servitude and male chauvinism. Special schools for the mentally and physically handicapped were attacked as quasi-leper colonies from which their inmates should be liberated by "mainstreaming" into standard classrooms (whose teachers usually lacked special knowledge or equipment to cope with specific disadvantages). Any academic selection, either between or within institutions, was lampooned as a form of educational apartheid. Yet many of those who raised these cries also held that nothing short of "the Revolution" would change class structures—so that for them any educational

[13] V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works* vol. IX (Moscow, 1943), pp. 484, 467-468.

[14] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (tr. Hoare and Smith, 1971), p. 325.

[15] I. Davey and P. Miller, "Forced to Resist: The Working Class and the Imposition of Schooling", in *Red Education Dossier*, vol. 16 (Sydney, 1981), p. 35.

[16] Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, pp. 37, 42. For Gramsci on education see Harold Entwistle, *Antonio Gramsci: Conservative Schooling for Radical Politics* (1979).

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changes, however radical, must be futile.

It seems ironic that many teachers and educational administrators, political moderates as well as radicals, welcomed so warmly the conclusion reached in 1966—by James S. Coleman (and popularised by Christopher Jencks[17])—that school organisation, teaching methods, and curricular content are all relatively unimportant; for educational results are almost entirely determined by external family and socio-economic factors, over which schools exert very little influence. That many voters and politicians accepted this negative conclusion helped to end the great educational expansion of the 1960s and early 1970s. The attraction of this dismal doctrine for the education industry was that it promised indemnity from blame in cases of educational failure, always caused by "uncontrollable forces" (although credit for educational successes naturally enough contrived to be made).

In 1981, after massive research conducted under the auspices of the University of Chicago, James Coleman, Sally Kilgore and Thomas Hoffer produced *Private and Public Schools*, which showed decisively that schools are an immensely important independent variable in educational results. This conclusion, a mere truism to parents and to the general public, has been bitterly opposed since 1981 by radical progressives.

Christopher Jencks to his great credit followed Coleman in admitting earlier error, while in Britain Michael Rutter's massive study of a group of London comprehensive schools confirmed that different schools may produce very different patterns of achievement and behaviour from very similar boys and girls.[18]

Yet the education industry, especially in teacher training, continues to resist such claims about the power of education. Many courses, for advanced diplomas as well as for initial qualifications in education, continued in 1986 to acquaint their students with the work produced in the 1960s by Coleman and Jencks rather than their contrary findings of the 1980s. This, as Lenin would have noted, is scarcely an accident.

THE SECOND CONTRADICTION is between the radical doctrine that the working class in its various occupations represents "the best of humanity" and "the main hope for the future", and the opposite view that to enter a working-class occupation represents failure to achieve social mobility and illustrates the essential permanence of class domination. This tension, like so many others, is one which persists beyond the Revolution.

In the Soviet Union much praise is bestowed on the Proletariat and the Peasantry (or collective-farm workers) as the foundation of the socialist state, but able children are exhorted that if they do not work harder in school they will end up . . . as proletarians or collective-farm workers. The reconciliation of the rhetoric of the equal value of all ways of life with that of the cultural and/or material inferiority displayed by certain ways of life is but one of the acute dialectical demands made on our long-suffering radical progressives.

This conflict is particularly grievous in respect of knowledge itself. Highly influential brands of radical progressivism insist that the "legitimated knowledge", which schools are required to impart, is necessarily "distorted" or "perverted" to suit the interest of the ruling classes. Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist widely recommended by the Open University in Britain, holds that there is a fundamental dependence of education on a system of power realities; the cultural choices made in both the content of know-edge taught and the distribution of students into academic hierarchies reflect the social hierarchies of the class culture and structure. As Bourdieu claims,

> ". . . the school is required to perpetuate and transmit the capital of consecrated cultural systems. . . . Culture is merely a mechanism for the reproduction of social classes . . . all pedagogic activity is symbolic violence."[19]

In a standard radical progressive version of Morton's Fork, "unfair discrimination" is alleged if working-class children are not supplied with just the same "cultural capital" as middle-class children; but charges of "brainwashing with bourgeois values" are made if this same "cultural capital" *is* provided. A variant—popular in Australia—is to accuse governments of apartheid if they educate Aboriginal children in a different way from the rest and of "cultural genocide" if they do educate them in the same way. Most radical progressives of neo-Marxist persuasion also stand open to the notorious Paradox of the Liar: they claim that it is impossible in capitalist society to avoid the hegemony of ruling-class ideas, but they themselves, thank you, manage it all the time.

TRADITIONAL MARXISTS SOUGHT to analyse their policy weaknesses and to find effective political and industrial strategies. But this practical approach is largely displaced in neo-Marxism, despite an abundance of fiery rhetoric, by a pervasive conspiracy theory or, worse, by a theory of a self-perpetuating capitalist state-machine which scarcely needs conscious human agencies to reproduce its lineaments. Both of these neo-Marxist positions profoundly weakened the confidence of radical progressives as a whole in the capacity of education within capitalist societies to advance significantly either knowledge or social transformation.

Althusser's thesis, that the essence of "late capitalism" pervades every important aspect of life and thought through the mediation of the Ideological State Apparatus, conflicts

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[17] See James Coleman, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Washington DC, US Government Printing Office, 1966); *Equal Educational Opportunity* (1969). See also Christopher Jencks *et al.*, *Inequality: Reassessment of the Effects of Family and Schooling in America* (1973).

[18] Christopher Jencks and James Crouse, "Aptitude vs. Achievement: Should We Replace the SAT?" *The Public Interest*, no. 67 (Spring 1982), pp. 21-35; Michael Rutter *et al.*, *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children* (1979).

[19] Pierre Bourdieu, "Intellectual Field and Creative Project", in Michael F. D. Young (ed.), *Knowledge and Control* (1971), p. 178; Bourdieu and Passeron, *Cultural Reproduction* (tr. Nice, 1970), p. 19.

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with the traditional Marxist view which held that:

> ". . . the existing educational system can be the arena for political struggle, and that educational reforms can be fought for and won which are steps towards the evolution of socialist education."[20]

In neo-Marxism a strange dichotomy operates. Shrill calls are constantly made for political action within the educational system, but no significantly valuable change is held to be actually realisable within capitalism. Indeed, apparent gains of civilised societies in the past, which were valued in traditional Marxism, are dismissed on the grounds that such changes would never have been permitted by the far-sighted ruling classes had they offered any real threat to capitalism; changes which do not threaten capitalism are valueless. We are reminded of Marx's dictum (Groucho, this time) that "I don't want to belong to any club which will accept me as a member." The distaff side of neo-Marxism is especially vulnerable to defeatism, despite its stridency. Almost every past gain by women is belittled by them and even the successes of contemporary Women's Movements turn to dust at the thought that the ISA and the Patriarchy only permit what is ultimately in their own interests.

Some American neo-Marxists (such as Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis) advanced a thoroughly reductionist or "economist" thesis, which holds that schools simply function as suppliers of "appropriately" educated labour. According to this "political economy of education":

> ". . . the children of managers and professionals are taught reliance within a broad set of constraints; the children of production workers are taught obedience. . . ."

It was claimed that working-class children "are so conditioned that their preferences are endogenous to the production process"; and it was also argued that

> ". . . the purpose of American schools for over a century has been basically the inculcation of attitudes that reflect dominant and industrial values . . . the result has been schools systems that treat children as units to be processed into particular shapes and dropped into slots roughly congruent with the status of their parents."

In this correspondence theory,

> ". . . different levels of education feed into different levels within the occupational structure and, correspondingly, tend toward an internal organisation comparable to levels in the hierarchical division."[21]

This line of argument within radical progressivism seems particularly wrong-headed since, in advanced capitalist societies, schools attended by groups designated by neo-Marxists as "exploited" or "underprivileged" are usually more permissive than institutions patronised by those dubbed "exploiters" or "overprivileged". Indeed two other neo-Marxists (Rachel Sharp and Antony Green) have made the opposite charge to that of Bowles and Gintis—accusing capitalism of deliberately holding back the progress of working-class children by encouraging "child-centred permissiveness" in state schools.[22] Certainly very few employers in the US, Britain, or Australia would concede that school-leavers seeking employment have in recent years displayed much evidence of having been initiated into those habits of "obedience . . . punctuality . . . diligence" which Bowles and Gintis allege that state schools have inculcated. Neither do the numbers of young people educated to particular levels appear to have very much relationship nowadays to employers' requirements.

Yet neo-Marxist radical progressives continue to believe that, although on the surface neither conservative politicians such as Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher nor the captains of industry seem to exert much influence on the ethos of schools or the content of teaching, behind the screen all continues according to the master plans of a highly-subtle ruling class.

Some criticisms of such crude reductionism have been made from within neo-Marxist radical progressivism. One criticism is that "the needs of capitalism" may be more complex than some comrades believe. The Centre for Contemporary Studies, for example, has been driven to conclude that:

In a Plastic Barrel

A headmaster *has told the Inner London Education Authority: Leave us alone to teach instead of inundating us with circulars on progressive education.*

Michael Kent, head of Comber Grove primary school, Camberwell, South London, complains of staff "bewildered" by fashionable ideas, and parents "suspicious" that their children are not learning.

Instead of a Three-Year Plan, a teaching schedule for heads, school advisers and inspectors should be laid down. Basic teaching is being sacrificed on the altar of progressive ideas, he suggests in a letter to the ILEA staff paper "Contact":

"Advisers pop in and tell us not to worry if Billy can't read. He's probably not ready for it. After all, he's only nine and he does prefer spatial experimentation by rolling round the corridor in a plastic barrel. Perhaps it's time for the so-called experts and advisers to step back for a while."

Daily Mail

[20] Harold Entwistle, "Varieties of Marxism and the Theory and Practice of Education" (unpublished paper, 1984).

[21] Samuel Bowles, "Unequal Education and the Reproduction of the Social Division of Labour", in Martin Carnoy (ed.), *Schooling in a Corporate Society* (1975), p. 59. Herbert Gintis, "Towards a Political Economy of Education", in *Harvard Educational Review* (1972), p. 271. Michael Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy and Schools* (1971), p. xviii. Bowles and Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976), p. 132.

[22] Rachel Sharp and Antony Green, *Education and Social Control* (1975).

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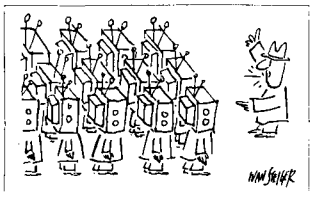
> ". . . in any specific historical situation industry's needs for labour are themselves extremely complex; these are not so much a question of the 'requirements of capital' as the needs of different, co-existing capitals."[23]

This refinement, however, is as reductionist and as incapable of generating judgments about educational values as its cruder prototype.

A second modification to the correspondence theory is to give more emphasis to the capacity of schoolchildren (and indeed of their teachers) to resist the toils of the Ideological State Apparatus. Teachers are sometimes part of the resistance (as when they strike, or use their classrooms for political indoctrination) but are more often seen as "objectively" part of the ISA.

Real resistance is held to be more likely to emanate from schoolchildren, particularly those in high schools. Pupils who wreck classrooms, disrupt lessons, and make educational progress an impossibility in any shape or form are praised for their refusal to conform. Paul Willis, a cult-figure within radical progressivism in Britain and Australia, commended "the lads"—the teenage hoodlums who treat women, foreigners, and teachers with contempt—as a vanguard of proletarian struggle. Currently, radical feminists (such as Jean Anyon and Lynn Davies) search energetically for comparable examples of "resistance"—not to "the lads" but to the ISA—among schoolgirls.[24] So is a *lumpenproletariat* glorified by a *lumpenintelligentsia*.

3. "Instrumental Progressives"



INSTRUMENTAL progressives seek to make schools much more responsive to what they consider to be the main needs of current Western societies. In other words, they want the schools to be what the correspondence theory (Bowles and Gintis) asserts they *must* be.

When I was a young teacher, in times of ample job opportunities for school-leavers in Britain, some older colleagues told me that it did not matter much what was learnt in school, since all the youngsters would get jobs anyway. In conditions of youth unemployment, 30 years on, I often hear it said that it does not matter what is learnt, since none, or very few, of them will get jobs anyway. . . . More thoughtful instrumental progressives believe that schools best prepare children for the world of work by training them in the most up-to-date techniques used in commerce and industry. Like today's dress fashions, however, today's "specific techniques" (especially those in computer technology) are often soon out of date. On the other hand, more fundamental understandings in mathematics and the physical sciences are likely to have much more enduring application and, ironically, to be a better vocational preparation than a more narrow vocational training.

Instrumental progressives are often particularly suspicious of the value of the humanities and the social sciences (apart, perhaps, from economics). They are usually concerned that children should be numerate, literate, and socialised into acceptable norms of behaviour; they doubt claims made for general culture and liberal knowledge. The crude politicisation of social science and, to a lesser degree, humanities in many key areas of Western education has deeply intensified the antagonism of instrumental progressives to their further expansion.

In Britain, for example, the Manpower Services Commission has been influential in strengthening vocational, "practical", and "relevant" studies in the secondary-school curriculum at the expense to some extent of more general studies. In teacher education, too, Sir Keith Joseph encouraged the expansion of the time devoted to "teaching practice" and the curtailment of courses in the philosophy and sociology of education.

When humanities and social sciences are presented as "soft options" for all students, particularly for those struggling with physics and the "harder" sciences or with the demands of foreign languages, they become particularly vulnerable to such criticisms. In the US, attempts to find a compromise between the claims of liberal knowledge and practical skills helped to produce the *smörgåsbord* of semester units of a very loosely-constructed character, which other English-speaking countries have started to adopt widely in the last twenty years after previously rejecting them. In Britain many comprehensive schools have fuelled the wrath of instrumental progressives by constructing "common core" curricula of an undemanding character, taught at the pace of the slowest learners.

INSTRUMENTAL PROGRESSIVISM in the English-speaking countries falls into two principal forms. One insists on the duty of responsible public authorities, whether national or local, to ensure that there is an adequate vocational, practical, and "relevant" content in the curriculum. The other demands that parents should be given much more choice about the type of education experienced by their children—voucher schemes[25] are the preferred vehicle for conferring greater rights upon parents. Although the ultimate objectives of these two groups are often similar, their immediate political tactics differ significantly. The one seeks to give statutory authorities more power over the teachers and

[23] Centre for Contemporary Studies, *Unpopular Education: Schooling and Social Democracy in England since 1944* (1981), p. 21.

[24] Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (1977). See also Jean Anyon, "Intersections of Gender and Class: Accommodation and Resistance by Working Class and Affluent Females"; and Lynn Davies, "Gender, Resistance and Power", in Walker and Barton (eds), *Gender, Class and Education* (1983).

[25] On vouchers see S. R. Dennison, *Choice in Education* (Institute of Economic Affairs, 1984); E. G. West, "Education Vouchers: Evolution or Revolution?", in *Economic Affairs* 3 (1982); Arthur Seldon, *The Riddle of the Voucher: An Enquiry into the Obstacles to Introducing Choice and Competition in State Schools* (Institute of Economic Affairs, 1986).

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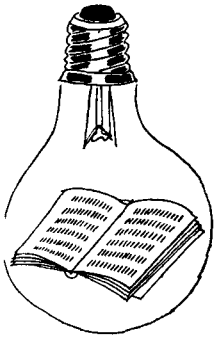
their schools; the other to transfer this power to market demand as expressed by parents.

4. "Liberal Progressives"



THE IDEAL of liberal education, in the sense in which I am using the expression, is defined by its central concern with the development of mind by initiation into knowledge deemed to be intrinsically valuable (and independent of the demands of any particular trade or profession), and by its adherence to some notion of hierarchy within knowledge. Just what knowledge is of most value in the development of mind is in the sense of one philosopher a "contestable concept", indeed a "necessarily contestable concept".[26] Thus liberal education must, to some extent, be defined negatively by its refusal to confine itself to the perceived or felt interests of the individual child, or to the demands of social reconstruction or of economic efficiency.

Not all liberal educators have been "progressives" in any significant sense. From Plato and Aristotle to T. S. Eliot and Geoffrey Bantock, many of the greatest proponents of liberal education have been sceptical about the extent to which the most valuable knowledge could be disseminated. Sometimes their doubts were rooted in beliefs about genetic endowment, and sometimes in fears about the power of cultural milieux to restrict the development of the mind.

Other Western thinkers have been much more optimistic about the potentialities of average human beings to grasp a wide range of the educationally worthwhile. In the United States Jacques Barzun and Arthur Bestor, and in Britain Richard Peters and Paul Hirst, have been among the liberal educators who have been "progressive" in holding that—whether or not there are ultimate limits to the proportion of human beings capable of being successfully initiated into liberal knowledge—such limits are far from being reached at present.

A powerful strand in traditional socialist thought, both Marxist and non-Marxist, requires that "the best of culture" should be the educational inheritance of the many and not of the few. Thomas Burt, the first Labour Member of the British House of Commons, urged:

> "Educate a man not simply because he has political power and simply to make him a good workman; but educate him because he is a man."[27]

Radical progressivism in the English-speaking world (and in Scandinavia, and elsewhere in the West) is in deep disarray because so many of its adherents have lost, or never possessed, any real confidence in the intrinsic value of knowledge or in the capacity of the average child to cope, even in the most propitious learning conditions, with advanced forms of knowledge. However, the enemies of liberal knowledge do not flourish equally in all Western states. France, in particular, even though it has produced many of the leading obfuscators of contemporary thought (Althusser, Bourdieu, Foucault) has more seriously than other Western countries sought to extend to the masses the educational content once available only to the upper classes. On both Right and Left, French opinion has generally favoured the disengagement of the quality of education from the anticipated character of future employment. There has been widespread agreement that:

> "In a democracy, where each worker is a citizen, it is indispensable to keep specialisation from becoming an obstacle to one's understanding of the greater problems of the society and to ensure that man is liberated from the limits of his own work by a broad and solid general culture. . . ."[28]

This ideal, requiring as it does considerable autonomy for educational institutions, has held ground in France against the claims of child-centred theory, or of revolutionary Millenarianism, or of instrumental Utilitarianism.

THE GAULLISTS have generally held fast to the view that *la culture générale* should be the basis of the *Collèges de'Enseignement Secondaire*; the French Communist Party continues to assert that (as one official spokesman once put it) "What we wish to ensure above all is to raise the level of general culture for all. . . ."[29] President Mitterrand has recently entered into educational debate to stress the importance of France's cultural heritage (classical and medieval as well as post-1789) to all the youth of France.

France has not lacked seductive voices urging that she should follow in the wake of Anglo-Saxon educational follies. Bertrand Schwartz has advocated the *smörgåsbord* curriculum, based either on the "felt needs" of the child or on the needs of current technology.[30] The *Confédération Nationale du Patronat Français* has expressed doubts as to whether the masses want or need anything beyond vocational training. The minority *Partie Socialiste Unifié* once followed Ivan Illich and called for the abolition of state provision of schools. The "Green" René Dumont once urged on behalf of his party the "Chinese model" (Cultural Revolution type) for France.

French commitment to a not-too-watered-down version of liberal education has stayed largely intact, however, and, in contrast to the unhappy deterioration of teacher unions in Britain and Australia and of the National Educational Association (although not the American Teachers' Federation) in the United States, French teachers and aca-

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[26] W. B. Gallie, *Philosophy and the Human Understanding* (Schocken Books, 1968).

[27] Cited in Brian Simon, *Studies in the History of Education 1780-1870* (1960), p. 367.

[28] L. Decaunes and M. L. Cavalier, *Réformes et projets de réforme de l'enseignement français de la Révolution à nos jours, 1789-1960* (Institut pedagogique national, 1962), p. 126.

[29] Michel Duffour in *L'éducation*, no. 342 (2 February 1978), p. 24.

[30] Bertrand Schwartz, *Une autre école* (1977); *L'éducation demain* (1973).

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demics oppose any relaxation of content or of standards as a reactionary move to track the masses downwards and as a threat to French learning and culture.

Italy, where Gramsci's influence has helped to keep alive among Marxist teachers a serious concern for "the initiation of children into higher culture", also continues to be a more fertile soil for liberal educational ideals than the Anglo-Saxon countries (although less so than France). Liberal education is always capable, as are all movements and traditions, of being hijacked or subverted, and is vulnerable to emasculation by educators who fear to make serious intellectual demands on their pupils. Sometimes this is because of fears that failure might demoralise them or lower their self-esteem—this seems to be the most odious form of "élitism"—a favourite boo-word among child-centred and radical progressives.

YET WHAT I depict as liberal progressivism, beleaguered as it is in my native land and in my adopted country, does offer the best hope for the future. It demands continual debate on the nature of the educationally valuable. It seeks the furthest extension of the educationally valuable among the masses. It does not reject the importance of specific skills related to future employment; but its emphasis is on that which most fulfils the potentialities of what Marx termed "species man"—ourselves in our universal lineaments.

Threats to such an education are by no means unknown in other parts of the world, and indeed some states have never experienced liberal education in any shape or form. But the foregoing analysis is sufficient (alas) to indicate that there are severe obstacles in the Western world to liberal ideals in education. Comfort and perhaps hope can be gathered from the fact that there are acuter tensions, more glaring failures, and deeper ideological contradictions within every other educational ideal professing to be advanced, progressive, or forward-looking. As Woodrow Wilson once pertinently remarked:

> "By a progressive, I do not mean a man who is ready to move, but a man who knows where he is going when he moves. . . ."

The disorientations are deep and widespread. But the civilised association of freedom with *liberal* is inescapable.

Hunters in the snow

What sends them sullenly forth,
These men, indistinguishable
Leather-brown
Against dark trees,
Treading tenacious snow?
It is hunger surely—
Hunger, or fear of it—
A long winter yet
And the last pig killed.
See where it crackles in the golden flame.
Will they burn all,
Improvident,
Tables and corn and all?
The hunched child stands
And watches them,
Shrugs, now there's a fire,
Why not be warmed by it?

Grey-green and not quite white
The landscape lies below,
Black figures skating
On the frozen lake,
Birds sit fixed in trees
Or take chill wing
Against the wizened hills.
Still the men trudge forth
Leading the hang-dog hounds.
What game is there
Beneath the breathless sky,
What quarry still to seek
But the distant spring?

June Osborne

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Allan Luks

The Doctor & the Social Worker

As I STEPPED OUT of the elevator, I looked down the hall toward the doctor's office and saw the door blocked by the back of his tall body, his broad shoulders under a light green army jacket, his mangled, uncombed hair.

He had to hear the elevator's doors—but he didn't turn around. His back dared me to come closer to it. Was he expecting me to touch his jacket or say "excuse me", so his body could gain that quick intimacy which would allow it to whirl around and ask for money?

On the right wall, near the office door, I saw the cover of an intercom. I could reach over his shoulder and hit its button if he refused to move, or if he turned too suddenly. I came closer.

"Waiting to go inside?" I asked.

His head twisted around, its very black face, and his dark eyes raced at my blue ones, touching them.

"Door won't open. I didn't want to knock loud. It's a doctor's office."

"Press that button—there. They'll ask you your name and let you in."

"You a patient?"

I nodded as he still faced me. We stood too close. Filling up space as we stood still—I dropped my eyes to try to stop this growing, and I saw his loafer shoes, so worn, the brown leather wrinkled as if it were a used cloth. Yet they had been shined recently, the paste darkly colouring the criss-crossing cracks.

My eyes were able to look up. "I'll press the buzzer." My hand reached past his shoulder, moving over his green field-jacket. "You're a patient too?"

"Yeah." He stepped behind me, as if I deserved the right to enter the office first because I had pushed the small button in the wall. His eyes now on the back of my head—what did they see?

"Who, who?" the confused electric cracking asked.

"Steve Malin, and another patient"—my face turned back, inviting him to call his name, my eyes now able to demand that he speak—

The impatient electric release sounded and popped free the door with the bronze plaque and the etched name of Irvin Walter, MD, PC, and the polished knob swung in my hand. The white-coated receptionist sat behind a long counter. On my left I noticed the seated, waiting bodies and felt them study us, guessing at our health problems.

I checked her face to see if it remembered mine. My last appointment was two years ago, but perhaps I somehow had registered in a certain way then. I wanted to believe that—

"Mr Malin, if you'll just have a seat." But the receptionist looked past me as she spoke. "Can I help you? You have an appointment?"

He stared at the many folders on a table behind her, as if he had come to count them, check if any were missing—

"This is a medical building", he said, speaking to the piled records.

"This is Dr Walter's office. If you're looking for another doctor, give me his name and I'll look up the room number."

"My family is sick. You got that? You're supposed to help the sick."

As he finished speaking, he looked at her. His big body stood near the counter and also close to me. But I sensed I wasn't there for him, while his large head stared down at her and she glared back.

I had to speak—and I wanted him to feel that, and I also screamed at those seated-watching bodies behind me: *Yes*, I am getting ready, if you can't see that!, and while I watched him: *You* can't touch anyone here, touch another's skin, tear at it, you *can't* want to feel someone else's blood—

"It's my kids, you listening?" he said to her. "Give me for them. I'm talking to *you*, girl—"

"HEY, C'MON! There are sick people here! We can't tolerate any commotion. You have to leave. The door's behind you." Irvin's short, white-coated body had come out of his examining rooms from a door behind the counter. As he talked he picked up one of the folders near the receptionist and glanced at the name on it, as if he couldn't be expected to give all his attention to this man on the other side of the long, polished, wood barrier. Irvin now stood only a few feet from the counter; the receptionist retreated toward the back wall.

"Maybe you didn't hear me", Irvin said, still glancing at the file in his hands. "Is that your problem? The hearing lab is on the first floor."

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The big man looked with me at Irvin's newly tanned face, at the hair cut fashionably short but eroded on either side by two deep peninsulas of recession, and at the carefully knotted silk tie bordered by a fresh, stiff collar.

". . . I came out to ask my receptionist to look up information on a sick patient inside. And I see she's stuck with you. Listen! I got a heart case back there. If I don't give him the right help quickly, that could mean damage. The big kind! You hear? And let me tell you—*you'd* be responsible. That's what they'd arrest you for. Hell, why am I wasting time?" Irvin turned to his receptionist, who waited behind a small table. "Joan, call the cops. C'mon, hurry!", and he spun back: "I used to help out in prisons. Let me know where you end up. If I know the doctor there, I'll make sure he'll check your hearing." Irvin stepped back toward the examining rooms—then stopped, waiting, his eyes directly on him—

But the large, dark face suddenly turned to stare at me! His eyes grew out of their dark background, demanding to know. But what, what? To know that *I* understood what he really wanted? He watched as if I had always been his only audience—and that I always knew this! But was I just imagining this—?

He was gone! His big, green shoulders out of the office. I ran to the door, holding it open, Irvin behind me. But we just saw a clean carpeted hall, and the closed elevator doors, on each one half of a painted geometric design that met its mate perfectly—

"Phone Sleeping Beauty downstairs to grab him", Irvin yelled to the receptionist.

"I have, there's no answer. I think he gets a morning coffee break about now."

"Wonderful, a doorman whose specialty is telling everyone whether he had a good cup of coffee today. OK, call the cops."

Irvin closed the office door, and reached up and put an arm around one of my shoulders.

"Well, old buddy, can't let my waiting patients be bored. Not with what I charge."

Irvin's small hand lightly pinched my shoulder, while his stiff, long, starched white coat resisted the closeness of my body—

"What the hell is with you?" he suddenly whispered, his small mouth near my ear, a closeness allowed friends. "*You* couldn't think of anything to tell that ox? That you were a leper, you had TB, one breath from you and his great pork drops off. Hell, we both got the same *Yiddishe kop*."

"I stayed quiet so you could test yours."

"You think I'm ever in cold storage? C'mon! My girl pushed a special emergency button right away that got me out here. We have a procedure. You think it's the first time some crazy got in?"

I followed Irvin's glance toward his receptionist, who now sat near the small table by the far wall and talked on the phone.

". . . There's a small drawer in back of the table. It jumps out if you touch a button that's on one leg. There's a twenty-two in it. Believe me, she knows how to use it. I make her go to a range a couple of times a year. She knew I'd walk toward the counter, then step back. She always had a clear angle to that dumb ox. She could've put one right through a nostril and into his head, without causing a nosebleed—

"Ladies, gentlemen, there's nothing to worry about", Irvin said, stepping ahead of me and facing the waiting area. He left me near the door, watching off-stage. They looked out at him while sitting in a mixture of heavy wood antique and metal-leather chairs, and under the abstract and classical oil-painting on the walls. For within this office, there was no real diversity; patients felt Irvin Walter's medical knowledge, the best medical knowledge, unify the room, unify them—

". . . I bet none of you believed my line about a cardiac inside." Irvin's smile kept appearing on his face while he talked, as if linked to a jumping electric gauge. "The truth? I was running some hot stool-sample tests back there. I wanted to return before they cooled."

Irvin's smile now received their smiles. But they had to be studying me, I thought, as I stood by the door. Me, who had just stood by the counter before; studying me, as they exchanged understanding smiles with their doctor.

Irvin turned to me. "See this kid here? Would you believe we went through high school together? Don't ask me why he looks so much younger. There's no medical answer—but something must be wrong with him." Irvin laughed. "He's one of those social workers trying to solve all the problems. But I think today we gave him a tough one." Irvin stared at me. "You know, he does look a little shaken. Let me take a look at him."

Irvin nodded for me to follow him—had he winked at me?—and we walked into the waiting area and toward a door that led into his examining rooms—Irvin suddenly stopped, and my body, so much taller than his, had to quickly and clumsily brake itself.

"You know why my social worker friend beat me to the door when that low life ran out? You couldn't hear. But he yelled to him not to forget that it was cold out and so he should zip up his jacket! Ah, but I love him."

Their knowing smiles again. Irvin stepped aside as he opened the door, and as I passed by him I felt his quick tap on my rear.

"Second door on the right is my office, Steve."

A NARROW HALL, walls all white, the outlines of several white doors in them—and *the eyes* suddenly decided to jump out on these parallel screens, flashing quickly, in focus—out of focus: so many eyes, eyes watching me because *I* knew there had to be a way—there had to be!—to make them at least no longer able to so easily rush at each other, to hurt.

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And the eyes enjoyed themselves on the wall screens now. I only mentioned them, and then briefly, at social work conferences, where such words were expected, didn't matter. And so they never resisted a chance to display themselves to me. But where could I go on the streets to yell that I knew? What audience had to listen to me?

I sat in one of the matching chairs in front of Irvin's desk, simply-designed wood chairs that copied the colonial-style furniture of the American Revolutionary period. Medical journals lay on Irvin's desk as well as in a pile on a sofa near the wall. I remembered seeing too many medical periodicals the last time I was here, and was glad to see them again.

"You're in an élite group", Irvin said, as he opened a file that had my name on its side.

"What group is that?"

"Getting ahead of the doctor's other patients. That's for kings, presidents, and if you're about to die."

"I hope it's not the last."

"Hey, that might've happened to you with Mr Army Jacket—" The telephone buzzer, and Irvin's small hand grabbed the receiver. "Yes, who? Yeah, OK, put him on . . . Mr Simon? Yes, I reviewed the new blood tests. It still comes out the same. But now we know what we have to try. . . ."

I had been the first to see him. But I knew I'd see him first. I was always seeing him first.

"What do I tell him?" said Irvin as he hung up the phone. "That he has maybe six months? With luck. Ah, and we worry about the stupidest things. So how the kids?"

"Good. Yours?"

"Wonderful. Our kids are about the same age, right? Sure, I remember. My daughter—you should hear the boys calling. I mean, she's just twelve. My boy's in fourth, and I can't believe how he's shooting baskets. Hey, you're thin. You exercise? You should, Steve. But I hope you're still not playing basketball."

"At forty, I don't really play. There's a school with a couple of courts near our apartment. Some weekends I go there. I can't figure out how the air disappears from my mouth when I try to run."

"Damn, look at you. All your hair. No belly. I still remember you in a high-school basketball uniform. But, look, since you keep on playing baskets, let me advise you: heart doctors have worse fees than mine."

"But if I happen to get my cardiac in your office, would you add the emergency pounding on my chest to your regular fee?"

"Sure, and I charge double if your attack started because you were in my bathroom jerking off when you were supposed to be leaving me your urine. Oh, brother! Irvin, the kid, can't stop!"

Irvin quickly rose, brought the stethoscope to his mouth as if it were a microphone, then swung it casually around in several large circles before bringing it back to his face—"From Las Vegas, Dr Irvin Walter." His tanned face winked at me, the creases around his eyes growing and revealing white slashes. Irvin sang, "May God grant that big ox just in my office the joy of dying happily—*today*! And may God grant his unborn children even shorter lives!"

Irvin dropped the stethoscope, which lightly bounced against his chest, while he extended his arms, bowed his head, and returned to his chair.

"Ladies and gentlemen, that was Irvin the Kid, the Jewish pistol", I said. "Only his *shikse* receptionist fires the gun for him." My words too quick—?

"Those are funny lines? Oh, brother, you do need a doctor—"

The phone buzzed and he grabbed at the receiver, "Yeah, what? . . . Look, you heard me. I'll call back. Tell her I'm busy." Irvin hung up the phone and looked at me. "This woman at least has several years left. See, my day is getting better. But listen, *amigo*—hey, hey! With my language gifts I could be a social worker too." Irvin waited for my face to come to his, commit itself, and I smiled. "OK, *compañero*, what's on for today?"

"My annual physical."

"Your annual physical I see here is like every two years. C'mon, a Jewish annual physical is every three months."

OUR FACES WERE TOUCHING NOW, his tanned skin said: take this warmth; the stiff collar and the tie knotted in a tight V said: share my neatness. We're forever, and you know that, Steve.

"I'm quickly remembering the times we've all gone out for dinner", Irvin said. "Our regular group. I remember you always asking questions. And I'm thinking now that your questions have been aimed at *me*. Hell, I remember you once saying that you felt funny as we left some restaurant late and walked in the streets. You wondered if anyone else also felt it. You asked if it was something we ate or maybe something else. And that started everyone trying to figure out how he felt. Hell, Steve, were my answers your free physical exam? You social workers that hard up?"

"Heavy sauces, Irvin. I have trouble getting them down."

"That's it? Well, OK." Irvin checked boxes on a form that he had placed in my folder. "Maybe we'll get some extra blood today."

"Irvin, if he had held a gun, how much money would you have given him?" Quick words again.

Irvin sat back, holding his pen in one hand as he spoke, waving it, conducting the room's air. "You know, I can't even describe him now. I never looked at him. Because if you look like you're pleading, then you got *tsooris*. They get disgusted because you're too soft. And they give it to you! Or if instead you shoot your eyes straight into theirs—*boom*, they get angry and go for you. Either way."

But before he ran out, his eyes raced for mine. I knew.

"Say he had a gun. You wouldn't give him anything?"

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"Hell, of course I'd give him. I'm not looking for increases in my office cleaning bill. But to look at the Angel of Death? What's more disgusting? You think he's the last scum that'll try to get in here? Hey, I sound tough, right?"

"I remember you beating up little Sara in third or fourth grade."

"The hell. I wasn't tough enough. You notice in the waiting area the kid drawing with crayons?"

I tried to remember their forms as they had watched Irvin, then me, after his big body had run out but was still touching theirs. But then Irvin was joking with them, Irvin their doctor—

". . . Well, you think I'm moonlighting as a pediatrician? I need a fourth Mercedes?"

"I do remember. A little girl. She sat on the floor with some paper."

"Her father's my patient. He's got—believe me, you don't want to know. He's a widower and he called early. She had no school and he couldn't get a baby-sitter. Since he was leaving work at noon to see me, would I mind if she stayed here this morning? Tell me, what other doctor?"

"Only you, Irvin."

"But my point—I like the way I said that! My point! I could've also been a lawyer. Our special genes. Look, just ask me, and I'll help someone. But not someone who's become an animal. Anyway, give me a hundred bucks."

I laughed. "Doctors borrow from social workers?"

"Just Jew to Jew. Hey, that sounds like a new dance—" Irvin's chair swivelled from side to side as he moved his arms back and forth. "Give me the money and I'll make sure you do well in your physical today. Listen, it's a lousy hundred. You can win a trip to Japan. It's for my temple." He slid a rectangular yellow raffle ticket toward me. "You'll send me a check."

"Of course." I folded the stiff ticket and placed it in my pocket. "But when was the last time you were in your temple?"

"You have to go to temple to know how to sell raffles?"

"Medical school taught you?"

"Hey, I like when you joke with me. Ah, Jews!"

"Sounds like a sneeze."

He laughed, "We can't stop it! The Jews are alive!" Irvin looked at the ceiling. "*Momma*, remember Steve? He's here! He sends his love. We're always together, no matter when I see him."

Irvin opened a bottom drawer of his desk and pulled out two large yellow stacks of raffle books, tied together by string. "What do you think? And I got about twenty bunches home. And these are just the ones I'm selling myself. But I should get you into an examining room."

Irvin rose and came out toward me but then sat on the front of the desk, his highly shined small shoes dangling not far from my knees, as he looked down at me.

"Steve, your hair is too thick. Get a couple of patches already."

"So give me a prescription."

The toe of Irvin's small shoe grazed my knee, the controlled light touching between friends, feeling his toes through the expensive leather, the special touching, reaffirming the unbroken tie.

"You're good, Steve. Sometimes I think too good. The work you do. No, don't be embarrassed—you don't have to look at me like that. But, feller, don't become too goody, no one likes that", and he slapped the bent wrist of his arm, "down, down, get back in your sleeve. It's only happy when my jacket is hanging in the closet."

GOOD, STEVE, *you're too good*. I hear creaking in my apartment while my family sleeps. My wife, my daughter and son, their breathing confidently relaxing in the night air of their home. While the creaking continues. Is it the walls expanding from the rising heat? The strained pipes carrying the boiling water? No, this movement has a pattern, projects a sense, *in our air*. This new motion has touched me first—as I knew it would. My eyes appear closed as they wait, but they watch through invisible slits, through an eyelash jungle. And then I see the shadow, a man's shadow, *oh, I knew, I knew* that one day it had to enter here. His shadow moves through our air, crudely disturbing it, his back turns to me—I jump up, grabbing the thick iron pipe from under my pillow, *down* on his head, *again*, its softness splitting, the little road-map of blood starting, *more, more*, blood rivers now, pieces of wet skin-hair touching my toes, bare toes, the cracked egg crumbling, unable to stay together, bigger pieces, sticking to my toes, I can't shake them off, and also dotting my arms—his head explodes, the pieces fly at my face, and yet I still swing, *again, again*. Yes, Irvin, to be *Good, Good*, this need has to be constantly kept as just a dream.

". . . Right after *Yom Kippur*, I agreed to be the raffle chairman."

"You actually were in temple this year?"

"You don't know me any more, Steve. I average two Saturdays a month now. Not only the High Holidays. And this was a busy year for me. After the Holidays, I took the family to the islands."

I remained listening to Irvin's Caribbean vacation, while I remembered a young Irvin at his home waiting for the time on Saturday when I returned from temple with my parents so he could call and we'd go play. He came to the synagogue with us a few times—because his parents had gone somewhere and he was staying at our apartment—and he entered into the words, the chanting, and the movements in each row, which he didn't know. Irvin rose and sat with us—but a moment behind my body, all the other bodies, playing

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catch up with this mystery, the Jewish mystery, *his* mystery.

But now Dr Irvin Walter prayed in temple twice a month and headed the raffle drive. Had become part of the special Jewish rhythm. Understood it. While now I rarely went to *shul*.

On a Saturday, passing the synagogue I belonged to near my apartment, I now drove or walked quickly. I looked at the big stone building. No one knew what a synagogue should look like, each one was different. But inside always the same calls. Jews knowing that by coming here together, the rhythm would begin and grow, they'd become swaying-chanting-praying Jews: *God, God, it's us, after so much, hear us now*. While I hurry by outside, knowing too well the singers' songs and lyrics.

". . . A doctor's eyes light up on *Yom Kippur*, Steve. All these Jews hitting their chests. A mass of new heartburn patients."

"OK!" I said, my finger striking a line in the air to record an imaginary score, the way we used to credit someone in high school with a witty remark.

"You point well too!" Irvin said. "Good declarative gestures. We could've been a law firm—Walter and Malin. Oh, what a partnership."

Irvin suddenly tilted his head toward mine. I thought our faces would touch—but he slid his body off the desk, stood in front of me, and his little fist hit his chest as he looked toward the ceiling and talked—sang, "*And for the sin which we have committed before thee. . . .*"

"A doctor confessing his wrongs? God forbid a good negligence lawyer doesn't hear."

Irvin only nodded to me as he kept reciting the *Yom Kippur* confessional prayer.

I rose, stood next to Irvin, while he swayed noticeably, as if he were a pious Jew praying. I stood still, feeling his movement, while I stared past the expensive, small tree in a large ceramic pot in front of his window. I looked out to the street below, at its moving colours. The sun's warmth through the window shaped itself over our bodies; the edges of its heated fingertips, the very delicate tips, moved slowly over my face, over the sensitive thrusts of bald skin on Irvin's head, over us, together for so many years, the unbroken tie—

". . . *Al chait shechatanu lifanecha. . . .*"

"What?" Irvin said.

"*Al chait*, that's the Hebrew for the prayer you're saying."

"Oh, yeah. . . . *And for the sin which we have committed before thee. . . .*"

"*Al chait shechatanu lifanecha. . . .*" My fist touched my chest as I recited each sin. We filled the office with our low voices. Our different languages clashed as we prayed, knowing we wanted our words to hit each other, overtake each other, to produce a constant garble, produce a special cry—

". . . *Al chait shechatanu lifanecha. . . .*"

"*And for the sin which we have committed before thee* . . . Steve, I'm matching you chest shot for chest shot", Irvin said, hitting himself hard with each confessional line, instead of the normal chest tap. "*And for the sin which we have committed before thee. . . .* Who said Jews got little fists that can't defend themselves. . . ?"

"*Al chait shechatanu lifanecha. . . .*"

OUR WORDS-WORDS-WORDS had become a constant chant. I watched the sleeve of my sports jacket as my arm kept returning to touch my chest; I remembered choosing its unusual plaid design; and the blue shirt cuff showing beneath it, a blue I had selected to set off my blue eyes; and now watching this design and these colours press against my chest. "*Al chait. . . .*" *God*, this is the call that says, You're now deciding how much health we'll have this year. But they're already outside. Watching, watching *my family*, and ready to come into our house. And no one else can care because they're also being watched. And to have to feel this every day, and then with each dream breath at night, and now while I'm calling out to You about tomorrow when knowing that at any time today—oh, God, I am trying to believe—"*Al chait. . . .*" God, hear me, tell me. I'm crying Your prayer from the holiest day, repeating it so soon again—

". . . *forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement*", Irvin suddenly sang, the final lines of the confessional, the ending, the bursting out, the last words. Perhaps his nurse passing outside heard our strange noise. But I knew we didn't care, that we probably wanted her to hear.

". . . *silach-lanu, michal-lanu, caper-lanu*", I cried. No, not words for just another Jewish New Year this time, God. Please—

"Happy Jewish New Year a little late", Irvin said, turning to me and shaking my hand. "I love you, old buddy."

"Irvin, examine me already. Time is a doctor's bread. Look how much you've lost so far talking with me."

"Almost a new Mercedes."

"But it really could be the cost of the new Mercedes clock. The one with the digital calculator, whose numbers you press by beeping your horn."

"No, that's standard in new cars. You just don't know your upscale markets. Oh, what a team we are, Steviebabes! Now you're coming alive. You used to have that crazy humour. But today, almost nothing. None of your little *shtiklach*."

"Once Mary Foley asked me what the word *shtiklach* meant."

"Mary Foley—hey, she was so pretty."

We offered each other small smiles. Because Mary Foley was.

"I told her it meant the little ways, the little things

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that a person has. But I couldn't show her mine right there in the school lobby."

Irvin laughed. "OK!"

"She said she felt sorry for me, and if I wanted she'd help my *shtiklach* grow to be a big thing."

"Hey, Mary, Mary Foley."

Mary Foley *could've* said that, Irvin. To be able to offer a line that lets others appear aware, while it really was an awareness created by my words.

"Patients love when I joke", Irvin said. "Especially the *goyim*—they always love the Jewish comedian. Look, if they not only can see the Jews laughing but also ready to make others laugh. Well, then how bad can it be for anyone? So when you weren't giving out with your stuff today, you had your little doctor worried."

"To want to worry you? Never. Oh, Irvin, look at my beautiful body already."

I FOLLOWED HIM into an examining room connected to his office. "Strip to your shorts", he said. "I hope you remembered to put on clean underwear for the doctor. Get on the table. Turn on your side, away from me. Put your knees up. That's it. I got to make sure you're all checked. Who knows—you could have a brain tumour here. But, no, you look OK. Good. Sit up and just look straight out."

Irvin's small hands massaged the back of my neck, then under my arms, while his eyes wandered around his office, as if needing to stare away from me so he could best imagine the lumps sought in me by his fingers.

Then my feet hung loose as I watched my blood flow into the thick cylinder. I purposely watched it, observing Irvin's skill, showing my respect for it.

I thought I felt how the long needle in my arm touched the different layers of skin. That multi-layered expanse that had been stretched tightly over me, whose little cells might have changed in a certain way since the last time I saw Irvin.

"Hey, Steve, your insurance cover all tests?" asked Irvin, who sat and wrote at a small, white, metal table in the brightly lit examining room, his officer's field table.

"I don't know, but if it costs a few bucks. Social workers have some money."

"So how come you just bought one raffle? Hold on—" His finger punched one of the buttons on the wall phone, and he tucked the receiver beneath his chin while he still wrote. ". . . Yeah, who's next? After her? OK, use rooms three and four."

Irvin stood up and came over to the examining table. He gave me a note with an address on it. "It's for some extra tests. I wrote where you go. No rush. But at your age, our age—" his hand brushed my bare shoulder.

Irvin stepped outside the examining room. I finished dressing, and then felt overdressed with all my clothes on in the small room. Wearing a tie and sports jacket, my body felt bulky—

"Steve, listen, I have to see another patient. But before you go I want to ask you something. And I'm serious." Irvin closed the door behind him. "I've been thinking about this since we started talking today. I'd like you to suggest to your synagogue that they do a big raffle just like I'm heading for my temple. Because that could prepare our temples to join together in a second raffle campaign that's never been tried before. That'd last a whole year every year. And *you'd* head your temple's drive."

"Hold it. There are plenty of salesmen in my congregation. I'll ask them, if you want. I'm not the person to lead a raffle selling."

Irvin leaned his left elbow on the examining table, slouching, as if he were a teenager studying the adult who was in his room, this too small room where thoughts were unable to hide.

"The second raffle campaign wouldn't be like any other. The goal would be to get *every* Jew in your neighbourhood and my neighbourhood to give. It'd be a chain. If someone turns down a friend or a neighbour, then others go after him. We get this kid's Jewish teacher, his Jewish doctor, or maybe he's got a Jewish auto mechanic. There's always some Jew who can get a hook in. That's why we'll need a year. Because we're going to get every Jew! We'll get the newspapers and TV and radio to cover it. I don't know if you've seen the articles about some of the patients I've treated. I know plenty of reporters now. Our idea will spread, believe me. It'll take time. But the goal will be that once every year *all* American Jews will announce themselves. What d'you say? Start it with me now."

"What would you use the money for?"

"To buy shamrocks for St Patrick's Day! What do you think? We'd use it to help Jewish groups—poor, young, old. The regular reasons. You're the social worker, you know them better than I do. But money isn't the real test.

"I'm serious, Steve. Talk to your synagogue. I'm willing to give up some office time to work with you. There are so many drives to get Jews to give. So this raffle idea, while it's different it's not that different. That's why I feel it has a chance to catch.

"Look, we're not *boychiks* any more. At least you're not. We're fathers, our kids will *Bar Mitzvah* soon. And any Jew around our age, who knows everything that's happened—at least he has to try to do something special. Right? So I got mine now. And maybe God will see me trying and he'll stop national health insurance. Call it the Jewish education that our kids need to see. To let our kids forget—it's too damn easy, Steve."

The great Jewish family. And I feel the air in my home move when it shouldn't, the air that my sleeping wife, son and daughter pulled over themselves, already inside the Jew's home, playing with the Jew's air! Fear. Without having to smash the Jew's windows, paint his walls, scream in groups outside. While Irvin announces

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that this week the Big Raffle campaign's real estate division has led all other member divisions in selling—

"So, Steve?" Irvin turned his back to the empty examining table; and resting his hands on it, he slowly raised his body on to the thick mat, watching me as he talked. The young athlete performing a trick, while still checking the audience's reaction to his last one—

". . . I remember us as kids—all of us, Steve. In the playgrounds, fooling in school, the craziness, the fun. Even when we were running around then. Say it was subconscious—but I felt that we were Jewish kids free to run crazy, run wild, laugh too loud, shout at anyone who passed. And we knew this.

"Steve, let's start it. And how often do we meet each other now? A couple of times during the year with the wives at some restaurant? But I can see you and I at my house working on the campaign. Then going outside to watch our kids play. You know how much property I got in the back. They'll have a ball."

I watch their four naked bodies, never-stopping naked bodies, running on the soft, thick green, which gives with each step, which always anticipates their weight, their movements. "Hey, without their clothes, these Jews all look alike", says Irvin, placing his hand on my shoulder.

". . . And, Steve, with the raffle you'd make contact with plenty of wealthy Jews. You could go back to ask for contributions for your agency. You can't lose on this one. Bring your family over this Sunday. Spend the day with us. The kids'll run free, and we can start to really plan. Hey, you know, I like your sports jacket."

Irvin's smile followed through to touch my jacket, inspect the small boxes in the plaid design, congratulate me for choosing each one.

"Irvin, I'm also so busy at work now. To start with you on something like this raffle—I just can't."

"You sound like you're all blocked up. But your prostate felt good. Relax, trust the doctor. Come over this weekend."

"I know we'd love to. Let me check if we're free. But we'll all just relax together. Forget the raffle. For me, I mean. But *you* try it. I really hope you do."

Irvin came over and took my right hand and held it. His eyes waited for mine, and then he smiled: "I'll wait for your call about Sunday."

Irvin's hand slowly released mine, "Stevie, *mein dalink boychik*, I know you won't disappoint your own blood."

"Irvin, beware of free predictions from doctors."

Irvin slapped my rear as I left the room, the coach's goodbye message. I walked in the hall toward the door that opened to the waiting area, but turned back expecting to see Irvin dart into another room and a new patient. But he remained in the hall, and we both nodded at the same time.

I passed the receptionist, who said, "Did Dr Walter say to make another appointment for follow-up?"

I paused, and she watched me: Your condition, Mr Malin, is none of my business, it's *your* problem, that's not what I'm asking about; my concern is our procedure that we have to continue to follow for this office to keep people healthy.

"Did you hear from the police?" I said.

She nodded. "They're checking." Her pen was poised over a card.

"The doctor asked me to take some tests outside. So I think he'll want to wait to see how I do."

AND THEN I WAS out of the office—and my big smile jumped out! The freshly examined patient leaving the doctor's office, knowing there's nothing wrong, telling himself: Of course, of course, I always knew how I felt.

And I watched the members of my temple—after the board of directors approved my plan—start their prayers every Saturday in the street outside the stone building. And then the fathers, mothers and children went into the synagogue to finish praying.

Then people heard about this street service and came to watch the strange Jewish ceremony. Heard the Jews sing chants, whose ancient melodies can vary between mournful cries and sudden victory outbursts.

Police soon put up wood barricades on the Friday before. On Saturday, cops held spectators in the confined area, as well as the reporters and TV cameras. Pictures on TV and in the newspapers showed the Jews calling out, lifting their faces up: the Jews, the Jews, who always know when Something.

Police on Fridays were soon dropping gray wood barriers in front of other synagogues in this city, in other cities. On Saturday mornings so many now watched—from behind the wood barricades, from behind TV sets. Watched the Jews, the Jews in the streets. Jews, Jews, the flock's bellwether, the litmus test, now in the streets.

They watched the Jews recite their traditional mourner's prayer, the *kaddish*, the unbroken link of children for parents, but now everyone reciting it, "*Ose shalom bimiromav, hu yaase shalom, alenu vial col Yisrael, vimru amayn. May He who establishes peace in the heavens, grant peace unto us and unto all Israel, and say, Amen.*"

This call was analysed by the reporters: "Jews say they must be able to talk honestly with their dead. The Jewish dead who have known so much. Those alive must say that they can now feel peace. To not be able to declare this—well, they say they must." So everyone must listen. All eyes—

So Irvin, ask your contacts at the TV stations for a free public-service announcement about the Big Raffle during a break in these news broadcasts. But Irvin, I do love you. So smile. C'mon, a real one.

And I left the medical building, greeted by the city street's confusion, rushing, noise. Did I actually believe my synagogue's board of directors would ever listen? That I, a social worker, could just call them?

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"Galina"

GALINA VISHNEVSKAYA *in conversation with* GEORGE URBAN *(II)*

1. "Western politicians should keep Lenin at their bedside"

GEORGE URBAN: *We know that you, Rostropovich, and other leading members of the Soviet artistic and intellectual world were extremely frank in dealing with the authorities, including the highest. You criticised, harangued, reprimanded Ministers, members of the Central Committee, Ambassadors, et al. You even gave Bulganin a good telling-off.*

GALINA: Let me just put it on record: Rostropovich is a gentle soul. His pleas and protests were always dignified. It was *I* who opened my mouth, and often gave them a piece of my mind.

—But why was it that these on the whole intelligent and constructive forms of criticism didn't cohere into a movement? Why was it that you and your like-minded colleagues did not get together to protect Solzhenitsyn, or Sakharov, or Orlov? I ask these questions not because I'm unaware of the difficulties in the way of any such concerted action, but rather because we know from the 1956 Hungarian and 1968 Czechoslovak experience (and to a lesser extent from Poland too) that reforms in a Communist régime can come only from those within the Party or the ruling establishment. It was your opposite numbers in Budapest and Prague—Hungarian and Czech writers, journalists, scholars, poets—who started the ball rolling. Why was it not happening, and why **is** *it not happening, in the USSR?*

GALINA: Soviet artists are not "joiners". Each fights his own little corner according to the requirements of the moment. They are too idiosyncratic, too quarrelsome, and too "difficult" to unite in a common enterprise. And there is too much treachery and jealousy among them for anything to emerge that could call itself a movement or even a pressure group. Then, Soviet society (if you can call it that, for it isn't a "society" in the Western sense) is atomised. There is no aqueduct between those little oases of intellectual and artistic independence that manage from time to time to survive for a while in the great desert of popular indifference and often outright hostility. There is a writer here, a physicist there; but the link between them is common suspicion as much as common purpose.

Musicians, on the whole, have it a bit easier than the verbalising artists because their stuff is open to interpretation. The composer writes his music; then the musicologists of the system come along and build a whole ideological platform underneath it. They will tell you that the music is about Lenin in October or the Colorado beetles the Americans have dropped on Korea or Czechoslovakia, that it's about the glory of Soviet power or *Sputnik*, or whatever. The composer, if he is wise, will say nothing because he knows that his music will exist and give pleasure long after this ideological garbage has been blown away.

But for a writer, or for a painter, life is more difficult. His language is more immediately representational, and he is therefore more exposed to the whims of the censor. So, for that reason, too, the various groups of artists and intellectuals don't easily recognise their common interests and work together.

—Before we lose the point: you said Soviet society isn't a "society" in the Western sense. Alexander Zinoviev made a similar observation to me about "politics" in the Soviet Union. What precisely is your meaning?

GALINA: Simply that in the Western countries society seems

GALINA VISHNEVSKAYA, the celebrated singer, formerly a leading soprano of the Bolshoi Opera, is married to the distinguished cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. She and her husband were deprived of their Soviet citizenship in 1978. Her memoirs, "Galina—A Russian Story", were published in New York in 1984 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, and in London in 1985 by Hodder & Stoughton.

GEORGE URBAN'S contributions to ENCOUNTER include conversations with Max M. Kampelman (February 1985), Alexander Zinoviev (April 1984), Jeane Kirkpatrick (November 1983), Eugene V. Rostow (April 1983), Daniel Bell (February 1983), W. Averell Harriman (November 1981), Zbigniew Brzezinski (May 1981), Leszek Kolakowski (January 1981) and Milovan Djilas (December 1979). The first part of his conversation with Galina Vishnevskaya appeared in the December 1986 issue.

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to mean that whole collectivity of people who live together, take part in local life, run voluntary societies, argue about the kind of schools and power stations that should be built in the neighbourhood, elect governments, criticise the local Bishop and librarian, and so on. This concept of society is wholly foreign to the Soviet Union. Our people take no part in any of these activities. Soviet life is run to the exclusion of the public. It is run, as I've said, by a Mafia. I was going to say that Russia has reverted to serfdom, but on second thought that would be too kind because it is worse than serfdom. Under serfdom the serf knew his master; he had a one-to-one relationship with him. One master might be more permissive than another. There was human contact. Under the Soviet system every man and woman is the property of the state. . . .

—The patrimonial heritage survives. . . .

GALINA: It does, except that the present variety is more soul-destroying. Now you have no one to turn to to express your anxiety. There is no human cushion; there is no tangible safety-net. If you express your dissatisfaction, the ruling Mafia will at once take it as a sign of rebellion and crush you. As long as the members of the Mafia do not have to stand in line for meat and potatoes, nothing will change in the Soviet system. And they have no intention of doing so. In other words: Soviet society consists of a privileged few lording it over millions of underdogs who have no say and no stake in the conduct of the nation's affairs.

—The sort of thing the Bolsheviks said they were going to overthrow in 1917. . . .

GALINA: And overthrow it they did, but then they brought it back with a vengeance.

YOU HAVE NOT QUITE *finished telling me why Soviet artists and intellectuals are unable to coordinate their discontent and turn it into something resembling meaningful reform. You spoke of small oases in a desert of indifference. May I say that you and Slava Rostropovich* were *such an oasis and perhaps the most memorable, because you offered refuge to Alexander Solzhenitsyn at great risk to your peace of mind and your careers. You put the world in your debt as much as Solzhenitsyn.*

GALINA: We did nothing we didn't feel we had to do. Solzhenitsyn was homeless. He needed some peace and quiet for his writing. Mind you, when we first took him in, he wasn't anathema in the eyes of the authorities. He was still a member of the Writers' Union; he had even been proposed for the Lenin Prize. It was while he was living with us that his harassment began. He was first expelled from the Writers' Union, and then Slava and I were told that we were to throw him out. When we refused, the militia threatened to take our *dacha* away. We stuck to Solzhenitsyn, but in the end we couldn't protect him any more than we could protect ourselves. I needn't rehearse the rest of the story.

—I still feel that you and your husband showed great and untypical courage. Oistrakh, who had been through the Great Terror, warned you of the risks; and so did others. Yet you went ahead.

GALINA: We felt: here was a human being in trouble. He was no criminal, he hadn't killed or cheated anyone, why should we throw him out of our house? Solzhenitsyn was taking the Communists at their word: "Reveal the truth about society", as Marxism-Leninism calls for in its credo. Solzhenitsyn was doing just that: revealing the truth about the state of his people and the Soviet system.

—Did you take him in because you felt here was a man of great talent with a message to your country and the world? Because he was a famous writer?

GALINA: No, we took him in because he was a human being who needed help. That was all. I had read his books; I knew he had been in prison for all those years and had been sick. I had read *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and found it devastating, and when I saw Solzhenitsyn I opened my house to him with all my heart. So did Rostropovich.

—So you took in a man rather than a book?

GALINA: Absolutely.

—Would you have done the same if Solzhenitsyn had written about Hinduism or a great train robbery?

GALINA: Clearly, Solzhenitsyn's leitmotif had a special relevance to me because he was passionately concerned with the Russia of our own time and experience. But the essential thing about him was that he had been sorely and unjustly tried, and needed help.

—Now that you have been cruelly punished for your courage—you lost the stage that had made you, Rostropovich lost his Russian platform, you have both lost your country—have you any regrets that you did what you did?

GALINA: None whatever. If I could live my life over again I would do exactly what I did then.

—Did you expect gratitude from Solzhenitsyn?

GALINA: None. Why should I? Slava and I acted the way we did because we heard an inner voice telling us that we had to help. It was a matter of conscience and quite simple.

—You acted, in fact, like a free man and a free woman.

GALINA: Yes, I think we did.

—But could you have done so if you had not belonged to the Soviet aristocracy—if you had been a washerwoman on a collective farm? Wouldn't you have ended up in prison before you could speak two critical sentences about the Gulag?

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GALINA: If I had been a washerwoman I would probably have had a different character to start with. I can't make a comparison. Certainly our prominent position in society made us act in accordance with that prominent position—openly. We didn't think we were slaves. Looking back on our lives in the Soviet Union it is quite clear to me that everyone in the Soviet system *is* a slave; and we were slaves too, otherwise we wouldn't have been forced to leave. But at the time we didn't realise that we were. Artists and certain intellectuals are permitted a semblance of freedom while they are at the top of their fame; but when it comes to harnessing that freedom to a serious purpose, that's the end of it.

—I'm still slightly puzzled why those various "semblances" of freedom that you and many other artists, scholars and scientists enjoyed could not be organised to some purpose. Isn't it true that people who believe they are free in a certain area tend to act as free people, and eventually acquire some of the real thing if they are persistent and lucky enough?

Andras Hegedus, the former Hungarian Communist Prime Minister, now a measured critic of the Communist system, talks in his autobiography ("In the Shadow of an Idea") about the "autonomy" certain prominent individuals have been able to carve out for themselves under Communist rule. These autonomies, he says, are the achievements of the individual and tend to be respected, within limits, by the Communist authorities. His own is, perhaps, the best example.[1] *He negotiated his freedom of action with the Hungarian authorities as though he were a government bargaining with another government. I suppose what goes for Hungary does not go for the USSR?*

GALINA: No, it doesn't. The "autonomies" you mention cannot be brought together under Soviet conditions. First, you would need big, courageous, shrewd and consistent personalities. There are very few of those. Second, you would have to have the freedom to organise, which you haven't either. I grant you, if Solzhenitsyn, Rostropovich, Shostakovich, Richter, Gilels and others would have been able to get together to present some petition or other to the Central Committee about, say, a composer or a musician who had been banned from the concert-halls, the Central Committee would have been obliged to take note and do something about it. But prominent people in the Soviet Union just aren't capable of cooperating like that. One is afraid, another is sick (or says he is), a third cannot agree with the language of the enterprise, and so on. There is no solidarity in our ranks.

Those of our artists and intellectuals who did manage to obtain a certain "autonomy" can now enjoy their autonomy in exile: Solzhenitsyn, Sinyavsky, Maximov, Zinoviev, Vladimov, Voinovich, Bukovsky, Rostropovich, myself, and others. It's a bitter story.

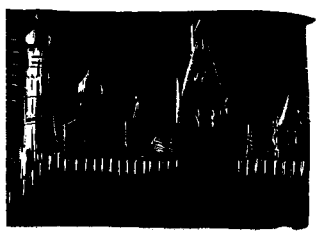
—Bitter and sad. Those critics of the Soviet system who believe that in the nuclear age some modus vivendi *must be found between the West and the Soviet Union still feel that the absolute precondition of a more trusting relationship is the reform of the Soviet system, and by "reform" they mean first and foremost a decent respect for human rights and the observation of the Helsinki Accords. Going by what you have just said, the prospects of so thoroughgoing a reform of the system are remote, because the only people who could push for them with some hope of success are unable or unwilling to do so.*

GALINA: The system has been with us for the best part of seven decades. It has not changed and I don't believe it *can* change. It is rotten from the ground up. You pull out a single brick and the whole building collapses. There is therefore no room for reform or experiments. The ruling Mafia know this and won't jeopardise the system and their own power by allowing a single brick to be removed. The system is as good as it ever will be, and that is saying something profoundly depressing not only about Soviet Communism but about the human condition too.

—So what are we to tell those Western hopefuls who seem to detect a turn to liberalism, legality, "thaw", a willingness to rein in the arms race every time there is a change of guard in Moscow? Malenkov, Khrushchev, Kosygin, Brezhnev, Andropov, now Gorbachov, and even Stalin were, at the beginning of their incumbency, all celebrated as harbingers of a modern and enlightened type of Communism. And we were asked not to make life more difficult for them because they were busy fighting off the influence of hard conservatives in the Politburo.

GALINA: Such observers are to be pitied, because they are either genuinely ignorant or so blinded by their hatred of the society they live in that they are forever hopeful that some utopian solutions will yet come out of the Soviet dictatorship. My advice, for what it is worth, is very simple: You can only hope to live in peace with the Soviet type of tyranny on your borders if you are strong and let the Kremlin know that you are. Western politicians and opinion-makers should keep Lenin by their bedside, for he set the rules that still run Russia today.

2. *Marshal Bulganin Falls in Love*



YOU HAD, *as you tell us in your book, a curious contretemps with one of Lenin's heirs, Nikolai Alexandrovich Bulganin, Marshal of the Soviet Union and Prime Minister at the time. He was, not to put too fine a point on it, strongly attracted by your charm and your singing and tried to win your favours. Unfortunately for the Prime Minister, you*

[1] On Hegedus's memoirs, see, in ENCOUNTER (September-October 1985), my review-article "The People are Coming!".

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had just married Slava Rostropovich. His advances did not make very good progress, yet neither you nor Rostropovich could afford to be discourteous or uncooperative. This is not the place to reveal the whole story; I am interested in the "patrimonial" side of Bulganin's courting of you.

GALINA: Bulganin was very upset because I had just been snatched from under his nose by an unknown cellist, a man much younger than himself. His courting was crude and passionate. He would send me his adjutants with carloads of flowers. The invitations to dine with him privately would pour in; he would telephone to urge me to sing at some reception or other, or would get the Minister of Culture to persuade me if he couldn't.

—How did you meet the Chairman of the Council of Ministers?

GALINA: I met Bulganin in Belgrade when he, Khrushchev, Mikoyan and others made their "trip of Canossa" to pacify Tito. It is the custom of the Soviet leadership to add some attractive singers, actresses, or dancers to their own dour company. So I was summoned to join the party and asked to dine with Tito, his wife (whom I was made to toast), and the entire Soviet delegation. That's where I met Bulganin. He was a portly man with an avuncular air and a ready smile about him, looking like everyone's idea of a great Czarist general (which he imagined himself to be). The very next day the first flowers arrived, and I knew I would have to do some clever manoeuvring to avoid trouble.

—You were becoming a member of a charmed circle and stayed there throughout your Soviet career. Was the circle charming, too?

GALINA: I had known these men only from the posters we had to carry, from the press and television where they had been displayed as supermen. Wisdom, virtue, foresight, a caring concern for the good of the people, revolutionary vigilance and suchlike were riveted to their names in the popular imagination. In reality I found them to be a closely-knit circle of ordinary power-conscious men of crude manners and sparse education, with a worm's-eye-view of the larger world, and unspeakable conceit. They were at the apex of the Mafia and they didn't make much of an attempt to conceal it. Also, most of them (and their wives) were very ugly to look at.

To answer your question: their charm was not immediately obvious, but their power was, and so was their addiction to alcohol. The number of times I had to sing to the chomping jaws of our drunken leaders is too many to remember. When I finally refused to comply with any more of Bulganin's invitations, I told him quite openly that I was tired of the gossip, that buffooning before his inebriated chums disgusted me, and that I found the whole experience humiliating. But that, of course, didn't put off the Prime Minister.

—What fascinates me most in your story is that Bulganin tried to treat you as part of his baronial estate. He was the great feudal lord who retained a kind of ius primae noctis, *a right of the first night, vis-à-vis the women of his choosing. Wasn't this Imperial Russia all over again?*

GALINA: Had Bulganin's passion for me arisen a few years earlier, neither Rostropovich nor I would have escaped. Without Stalin at the helm things were made a little more difficult for him. But Nikolai Alexandrovich was openly hankering after the days when men like Beria could hunt down the women they wanted and have them delivered by the security police. In his many alcoholic stupors Bulganin related to us with relish and a good deal of envy Beria's amorous adventures. I think he did look upon me as his property—one that had been temporarily rented but would be available again. Could he evict the tenant?

—Did it occur to you that he might have really loved you?

GALINA: It did, and I think he might have. Certainly the scenes that occurred between Bulganin and Rostropovich on the theme of who-loved-me-more and who-should-have-me belonged to a comedy; but Bulganin's feelings may well have been genuine.

—I don't think we can improve on the description that you've given us in your memoirs of how these extraordinary three-somes actually happened.

"N.A. drank a lot, and he made Slava drink. But Slava didn't need to be persuaded; he drank out of sheer wrath.

When they would both get tipsy, the old man would stare at me like a bull and start in on Slava.

'Yes, you beat me to it.'

'It looks that way.'

'And do you love her?'

'Very much, Nikolai Aleksandrovich.'

'No. Tell me, *how* can you love her? You're just a boy! Can you really understand what love is? Now, *I* love her. She's my swan song. But, all right, all right! Let's wait. I know how to wait—I've had my training.'

I would sit there between them and listen. He didn't acknowledge that Slava had any right to me. Every drinking bout ended with an explanation to my husband of how much he loved me and that anything I asked for I could have."

IN A TOTALITARIAN SYSTEM it is no small thing to be so passionately courted by a power-holder. Had you not been just married, might you have succumbed to Bulganin?

GALINA: Perhaps I might. As I say in my book, the temptation to be a Czarina to the Communist Czar would not have been all that easy to resist. I must be entirely honest: I'm not going to say, "Oh, it couldn't possibly have happened", because it might have. . . .

—Did you find Bulganin attractive?

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GALINA: Czars are never unattractive. If you look at a portrait of the Sun King, Louis XIV, he was an absolute nightmare. Nevertheless he had great success with women. Power is a magnet.

—Didn't Bulganin's declarations of love give you some small satisfaction—one of the Olympians, a Communist Prime Minister, prostrating himself at your feet?

GALINA: Let me put it this way: Bulganin's fervour did not in any way offend me.

—Nikolai Aleksandrovich had the reputation of being an intellectual sort of Marshal. Was he?

GALINA: In comparision with his cronies in the Party and Government he wasn't quite so barbaric. He had slightly better manners and a slightly more lucid mind.

SOVIET SOCIETY takes great pride in "Communist morality", which is Victorian and rather prissy by our standards. I find it surprising that the man who was Prime Minister in that society should have pressed his case quite so blatantly in front of your husband.

GALINA: Ah, but he was the Chairman of the Council of Ministers! He was our master and the rest of us were serfs. That was his basic attitude to Slava and myself. We were, in fact, lucky that we didn't live in Stalin's time. Beria used to have his girls' hands tied behind their backs—and on to the bed. Without any question: under Stalin my husband would have been sent to the Gulag or handed to the executioner.

—Was Khrushchev aware of Bulganin's infatuation?

GALINA: Of course.

—What was his attitude to it all?

GALINA: Khrushchev was a cunning and vulgar peasant. He would smirk and enjoy the story.

—He didn't come up to you and say: "Galina Pavlovna, you have a duty to Socialism"?

GALINA: No, he didn't. I saw Khrushchev only very occasionally.

—You said the leadership were very close-knit and power-conscious. . . .

GALINA: That is putting it mildly. They were drunk on power and highly arrogant about it.

—No revolutionary "humility" in the style of Lenin?

GALINA: None, if indeed Lenin himself ever had such humility.

A few years ago I was attending a concert in the Kennedy Center in Washington with Rostropovich conducting. In the foyer in the interval I saw Zbigniew Brzezinski, whom I had met a year earlier when Carter was President and Brzezinski his personal National Security Adviser. I walked past Brzezinski but didn't go up to him because I thought I had really nothing to say to him. Then suddenly I heard Brzezinski call out: "Hello, Galina! How are you? Don't you remember me?"

I was thunderstruck. Did *I* remember one of the most powerful men in the United States of America? And how could this still powerful man be so informal as to call out to me in a public foyer within the earshot of all and sundry: "Don't you remember me?"

This was as though, shall we say, Marshal Ogarkov or Mikhail Suslov had had the humility of thinking that he was an ordinary mortal whose image was not graven in perpetuity on the minds of all who had ever seen him. It just could not have happened in Moscow. Our leaders took it for granted that anyone who had ever had the honour of meeting them would remember them all their lives and do obeisance to them if they were fortunate enough to see them again.

—Stalin once made the famous remark that Communists were "special people", but probably he didn't quite mean it in the sense in which you have depicted the Soviet ruling class.

GALINA: They are indeed "special people". Seventy years ago they occupied our land and have kept electing and re-electing themselves ever since. Their images are our new icons, their wishes our commands. They are "special" in the way all history's tyrants were special to the people who were unlucky enough to fall into their hands.

3. In the Silence

ANYONE WHO HAS READ your memoirs is, I think, tempted to agree with Virginia Woolf that it is hard for a West European reader to identify with Russian life and the Russian character. She observed in one of her finest essays, "The Russian Point of View",[2] that there is "a cloud which broods above the whole of Russian literature." In Chekhov, there is too much bewildering inactivity, in Dostoevsky too much "soul", with its "violent diseases and raging fevers", and in Tolstoy too much questioning of the meaning of "life". "We find [she writes about Tolstoy] always at the centre of all the brilliant and flashing petals of the flower this scorpion 'why live?'. . ."

[2] Virginia Woolf, "The Russian Point of View", in *The Common Reader* (First Series, London, 1925), pp. 219-231.

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We are both enthralled and repelled; the landscape is breathtaking but alien to us.

Your book struck me with a similar force of enthralling strangeness. Yours is no fiction, and one should, I know, apply a different yardstick to it. But the common reader cannot quite do that. He reads you as a testimony to the most cruel period in Russian history, but also as history that might have taken a different turn had Russian "soul" and "life" not stamped it with their signatures. Your characters suffer from appalling luck; when they go down they die miserably of alcoholism or starvation; an air of doom envelops them and their families the moment they appear in our sights, and we pray that they be spared the tragedies we witnessed on earlier pages.

And where the air is less heavily laden, we marvel at strange and scandalous happenings. Who is that woman accepting a $400 bribe from the hands of Galina Vishnevskaya? Why, it is the Minister of Culture of the Soviet Union. Who is that man dropping dead at the rehearsal of Shostakovich's symphony dedicated to the theme of death? Why, it is Pavel Ivanovich Apostolov, Shostakovich's ideological watchdog and tormentor. Who is in that strange collection of singers who denounce Vishnevskaya and Rostropovich to the Central Committee for betraying the trust of the Soviet state and people? Why, they are Galina's favourite protégée Elena Obraztsova, and her Bolshoi friends, Atlantov and Nestorenko. . . . One could go on. Such amazing images flit past our mental screen in bewildering succession and we are left wondering: Are they real? Are they the portents of yet stranger things to follow?

GALINA: Your gentle mockery is well taken. I have no objection to your parallel with Dostoevsky and Tolstoy; if you accuse me of having written about the same country and the same people Dostoevsky and Tolstoy had written about—to that I plead guilty. But my story is sadly real, and very different from the sort of reality that inspired 19th-century fiction. Life under the Czars may have been hard and even beastly, but no one expected Tchaikovsky to write cantatas to glorify the deeds of the Czar and no one told him to make public denunciations of his fellow composers on pain of losing his livelihood. *Absolutism* is one thing, *totalitarianism* another—and that is my theme. The figures alone show the difference. According to respectable calculations, between the 1917 Revolution and the death of Stalin the Soviet authorities slaughtered, starved, beat or tortured to death or otherwise killed some 40 million of our own people. This is more than twice Russia's losses in the Second World War. Nothing like that happened in the 19th century.

Now, when your whole country is one festering wound, your individual men and women will bleed from a thousand wounds too. They will die of starvation, they will eat the flesh of fellow prisoners, they will betray their kith and kin for three square metres of living space; they will even write film music to the glory of Stalin (as Shostakovich had to).

And don't forget another thing: the Soviet Union is an enormous empire. It is the stage on which hundreds of nations, languages and civilisations clash and mingle. The conflicts in culture and perception are legion and the nervous energy they generate stupendous. Therefore it isn't (as you suggest) that the Russian people are unduly sensitive and metaphysical—although, for all I know, they may be that too—but that Soviet activism, superimposed on the permanent drama of the conflict of nations and civilisations, leaves the ordinary man in a state of breathless bewilderment.

Imagine the whole of Europe run by a single government, from a single centre, under a single ideology. Imagine the problems you would have to deal with as between Frenchmen and Serbs, or Englishmen and Spaniards, between Mediterranean and Germanic attitudes to work and time-keeping. That's the kind of permanent turmoil you have in the Soviet Union.

Let me, therefore, say that your slight incredulity is a sign that even sophisticated people in the West are not quite able to make the imaginative leap to understand what goes on under Soviet rule.

DON'T MISUNDERSTAND ME. *Personally I find the Russian inclination to use almost any human problem as a departure for profound questioning most congenial. It betrays a serious bent of mind, and the courage to face that great emptiness which is often the result of our quest for final answers.*

GALINA: This was more true of our writers and thinkers in the last century than it is today. Our "talking classes" today have more pressing preoccupations, such as finding a decent roof above their heads.

—Nor did I seriously think for a moment that Soviet life wasn't exactly as you painted it. Indeed, I believe it is paradoxically the intolerance of the Soviet system that has caused an important spiritual element to be injected into Western thinking, for which we must, by way of felix culpa, *be grateful to both Russia and Communism.*

Pope John Paul II is said to have remarked not so long ago that the Church does not need intellectuals but witnesses, and to the extent that it does need intellectuals it needs them only as witnesses. It is, I would suggest, the great merit of many of those Russian writers and artists who fled or were expelled from the Soviet Union that they are such witnesses—whether they are Christians, Jews, Muslims, or agnostics. They have brought back to us the authentic voice of suffering and the cry for deliverance at a time when our own culture raises them only hesitantly (or not at all). When Solzhenitsyn arrived in Western Europe he was first celebrated not only as a great writer but as a seer and a prophet.

GALINA: I hope you are right, but I am not absolutely convinced. The truth about the Soviet system had been told in volume after volume by the most authentic witnesses much before Solzhenitsyn. There has *never* been any excuse for a lack of knowledge. The question has always been whether people in the Western countries were ready to take in the truth that was reaching them from the East, and to do something about it. And there you may be right in hinting

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that Solzhenitsyn may have played a vital part, because he is not only an inspired chronicler of the history of Communism in the Soviet Union, but also a tormentor of the Western conscience for having done so little to oppose Communism as a menace to mankind.

I regard my own small role in the same sort of light. Now that I live in the West I feel it to be my duty to tell people what is really happening under Soviet rule. Anyone who has read my book cannot possibly say "I didn't know", or "I don't believe it". All Russians in the West have that duty, and I go on telling the truth about Communism to whoever happens to come my way: friends, the bus-conductor, the girl who serves me in the grocer's shop, my gardener. Let them all know—there must be no excuse left for anyone saying, "We weren't told. . . ." That much we certainly ought to have learned from the silence which surrounded Hitler's extermination of the Jews.

—Talking about silence, there is a scene in your book which left me with a lasting impression.

Solzhenitsyn's wife, Alya, came to say goodbye as she was about to join her husband in Switzerland. More than a month had passed since Solzhenitsyn had been deported by the KGB. *Alya Solzhenitsyn had assumed that your house was bugged, so she brought a blackboard and you proceeded to talk to one another by writing questions and answers on it, erasing the words as soon as they had been put down.*

GALINA: Alya wanted to know whether we too were planning to go West—and at the time we were not. Little did we suspect that Solzhenitsyn's deportation and his reception in the West would soon make it impossible for us too to go on living in Russia.

—But wasn't this a scene of pungent symbolism—you, Rostropovich, Alya, and through her Alexander Solzhenitsyn, trying to communicate with one another on a blackboard, in silence? I was reminded of Beethoven's deafness—and I could not help remembering your vibrant impersonation of Leonora, in "Fidelio".

GALINA: Yes, we were all of us what you might call people of "the word" and "the voice". Sound was our medium. Yet there we were, sitting in complete silence, like conspirators, trying to make ourselves understood in sign-language, and through chalk-marks on a blackboard.

Our voices had been strangled, first in public and finally in the privacy of my kitchen, too. If I were to make a film about our lives in the Soviet Union, this would be its final scene. . . .

© 1986-87 Galina Vishnevskaya & George Urban

Edgbaston 1939

Today great aunts are intruding,
they have been dead four decades.

Their roundness is enveloping me,
short kin kisses still unwelcome.

Linen dresses blend in the garden,
the stone seat hides hedge-sheltered.

Talk is as warm as the wine-dark sea,
a thirsty child is singing alone.

Insignificant shadows in kitchens
outline and fill out in morning-rooms.

Thin grey hands take a silver token,
return it washed and dried on a tray.

Front door bells ring for two wars,
toll and warn using the same notes.

On stone steps the last safe summer
comes and goes in familiar convention.

On the pavement a small hand fingers,
steadies a cool coin in a pocket.

In old graveyards auburn women lie,
have paid the ferryman with gold.

Pamela Lewis

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Tony Lucas

Postcards From Germany

First Impressions

Something about the cigarette machine,
its standing at the roadside, unmolested
by this big estate of flats—a kind of innocence
about those neatly-coloured packs behind the glass;

that, and the elegance of fish-bowl street lamps
nobody has smashed; even a wooden shelter
in the park for people to hold barbecues,
decked out with paper-chains and coloured lights.

At once, we are aware of just how dangerous
the streets have come to feel back home,
rancid with litter, nothing you can leave unlocked,
people united only in their shared distrusts.

Nothing is perfect, and our hosts complain that here
a drunk may shout out in the courtyard, Friday nights,
children get into mischief, certain husbands
in the block have beaten up their wives.

But, at a café table in the clean and spacious
precinct, with its architecture not contemptuous
of human scale, sipping good coffee in the sunlight
filtered down through silver birch leaves,

there is an easing-off, a slackening of tension,
letting the sharpness go, the fighting spirit
you could never dare relax in those raw streets
that have become our spiritual home.

Kuchen

And the long, hot afternoon spent
  visiting their family in the mountains,
where the children played for hours
  with just a hosepipe and a red umbrella,
sitting about and talking of *die Kinder*—
  their first days at school—of the landlord—
and retelling family jokes, while
  all the time a haze hung
on the distant fir-trees, like the bloom
  on *pflaumen*, picked for *torte*,
which we ate, with so much cream,
  and military aircraft passing over
to the base across the hill.

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Tourist at Aachen

Sitting at an outdoor table
in the Marktplatz, getting the blast
of Audis and Mercedes bumping past
over the cobblestones, he sips an Eiskaffe,
grows wistful thinking of Alcuin, gathered
with the lettered men of Lombardy and Spain,
planning to found "new Athens" in the forests
and rude abbeys of their king;

—trying to make the image of the eight
great pillars rising through the gloom
round Barbarossa's chandelier,
—the glint of so much gold—yield up
a few more whispers of those old
half-mythic men, who reinvented culture
in a space between the bloodshed
and their indefatigable journeys through the mud.

Smart people, in their beautifully-cut clothes
keep getting in his way, parading to and fro,
past the café, the sweet-shop window—
with a more immaculate display than nearby jewellers;
then the carillon begins to tinkle heavily
across the rooftops. . . . All this bright
and brittle present, so much of it, waiting
for the next barbarians to break.

An Arrival

Driving all day—air like a steam bath
making our clothes cling—halfway
across a continent, feeling far out,

with our supply-lines stretched; we came
at evening into a corner of the mountains
where the border closed three sides around.

The first great drops splashed on the baggage
being humped into the wide and musty stairwell,
just before the storm broke on the valley.

Thunder rolled down the hills; evening
dispelled the airless day, as village streets
were emptied by wild wind and rain,
—the old gods breaking loose
to rage at our complacencies,
making the lights blink out,

tearing great branches off the tree-tops,
scribbling their crazy neon signatures
across a blackened sky.

For hours the valley rang with fire,
till, with the noise of a receding battle,
they withdrew across the hills toward the east

—leaving us all alive to sounds of water
running off the roofs, the promise
of a long night's steady rain.

The Border

The way you keep on looking
at an unhealed wound, keep fingering
a scar left by bad surgery—

people keep coming here to view
the rough wire panels, concrete posts,
that weather with an ugly sort of shabbiness

against the grandeur of the open moor.
The air smells good here, fresh
and strong, though it is said the trees

are sickening from an acid rain.
Beyond the fence lie fields and woods
and houses which look much the same.

But notice-boards are shouting at us
HALT! HIER GRENZE
and the concrete watch-tower
squats above us on a shoulder of the hill

giving the evil eye—or, much more likely,
housing some bored young soldier
hungry for his lunch, a glass of beer.
It all seems very quiet—though we're told
that if you pass the green rail
troops will instantly appear, patrolling

with machine guns, on the other side.
The hikers and the tourists come, with cameras
and binoculars. It is as if it were

some beauty spot—except that now and then
you catch the trace of pain
or indignation, on a local face.

The buzzard hovers over no man's land,
taking his prey from either side at will.
We turn away as sun is breaking through

to shine on east and west alike, though
on the high moor, all the time,
this sharp wind blows, fingering our coats

and carrying seeds of willow-herb, that drift
across the barbed wire and the minefield,
claiming the ground they've always held.

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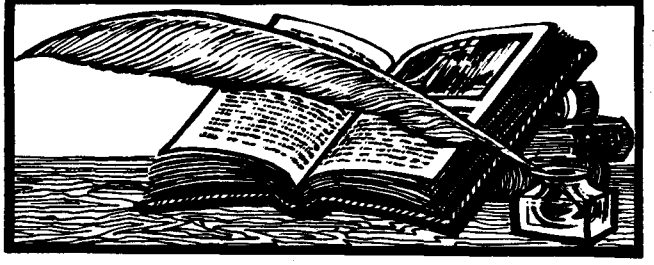
COLUMN



"THIS IS THE AGE—of the *train*!" British Rail's slogan tends to attract rejoinders like "Yes, ninety, and showing it" or "I guess they mean the 1840s". Yet, grumble as we may at dirty carriages, long ticket-queues, delays, cancellations, overcrowded commuter trains, and a Byzantine fare structure, many of us still feel warm toward the railways, as toward a large, ungainly, troublesome but affectionate dog.

The mood may date back to childhood and toy trains. Mine were clockwork; the smaller-gauge electric versions seemed upstarts. With cotton-wool streaming from their smoke-stacks, the locomotives hauled mixed loads round the billiard-room floor: a cream-and-brown Pullman car, a logging trolley, a milk tanker, an oil container, a crane truck, and assorted wagons and coaches. Quite often, they knocked over a cardboard bridge or plunged off the rails into a tin station or a die-cast model farm. Occasionally, with the points adjusted, there'd be a spectacular smash. But what I really enjoyed was the miniature scale of things, the fidelity of fine detail. I used to fill the tenders with chips of real coal.

Travelling by train, in those days, was playtime magnified. That snorting Great Western locomotive was my own *Caerphilly Castle*, more than life-sized. The dining-car had solid, not painted, table lamps. The smoke from the boiler billowed, and smelled deliciously foul. Here was one passenger, like millions, who'd been conditioned by make-believe.

But the pleasure was more than Pavlovian. Before boarding, we'd visit the station bookstall. My parents seldom bought magazines except for train journeys: now, there'd be *Punch* or *The Tatler* or *The Strand*. With luck, I'd get a yellow-covered thriller. On holidays, our heavy trunks would have travelled as "luggage in advance", so we'd feel unencumbered, settling into reserved seats in a closed compartment, or enjoying a rattling restaurant-car meal. Would the soup tilt over? Would the waiter miss the wineglass? It didn't matter. There was deft adventure in the balancing act as the downland sped by.

Today, with standardised meals and almost ubiquitous club cars, some of that thrill nevertheless remains. Now, as then, the train is a place for observing strangers, and perhaps meeting them—though more often in literature than life. Not every nervous fellow-traveller is Isherwood's *Mr Norris*; not every express is Graham Greene's *Stamboul Train*. These days, your enigmatic companion may well be a Paul Theroux, using *you* for copy. But experience sometimes conforms to a *Strand* magazine short story. Eavesdropping on boisterous businessmen, I've learned a lot about one politician's drinking habits; meeting another in the prolonged confinement of a trip to the West Country, I've had the story confirmed.

My most enjoyable rail journeys have been in India and the United States. From Delhi on one occasion, I rode the royal train, complete with a mahogany bathroom which gave new meaning to the phrase *en suite*. And from Kansas City I travelled to Flagstaff, Arizona, on *The Chief*, which 1940s crooners used to extol as "The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé". That was a revelation—not only of how "dry" States imposed their austerity on train travellers passing through, but also of how much American territory is literally dry, sheer desert. Sadly, the train walls were covered with lists of services taken off; and *The Chief* soon followed them. Air travel, buses, and automobiles had won.

In Britain, as the British Rail slogan proclaims, the battle is still on and the railways are fighting back. The regional divisions, based on the old private companies, are trying to boost their corporate pride. New rolling stock has appeared on Inter-City routes, some of it to be equipped with telephones—an equivocal blessing, and so far rare. Loudspeakers announce station names; buffet cars, when manned, exploit the micro-wave oven; even British Rail sandwiches, once an archaeological laughing-stock, are now being made by the firm which supplies Marks & Spencer. Britain's latest trains are not quite as good as the Trans-Europ-Express or the French TGV: but they're light-years away from the old wooden rattletraps with leather-strap window fastenings and wheels that chanted "Three-ha'pence-and-tuppence" on the jointed, unwelded rails.

So, despite club cars and the threat of telephones, it can still be pleasant to travel by train. In a plane or bus or coach there's little leg-room, and there may be an appalling movie. In a car, even as a passenger, it's hard to read. On a railway journey, it's easy to concentrate. Looking at one's fellow-passengers poring over statistics, reports, and Open University textbooks, one might be in a school or office on wheels.

A WEEK OR TWO BACK, on the way to an East Coast conference, I did my best to conceal the book I was busily reading. Not that it was an attack on the railways or an incitement to urban terrorism: far from it. What bothered me was its title, which I thought might mislead the casual observer. DRIVING PASSION, the dust-jacket yelled. A Mills & Boon bodice-ripper? No. A study, by two psychologists, of the emotions aroused and exploited by the train's major competitor, the automobile.[1]

I opened it with high hopes. A few years back, in this Column (May 1983, to be pedantic), I touched on the psychology of cars and driving, after watching a *schlock* TV series called *Knight Rider*, in which a talking automobile plays (*mutatis mutandis*) Rin-Tin-Tin. Now, I thought, let's see what the experts say. One, Peter Marsh, is Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Oxford Polytechnic; the other,

[1] *Driving Passion*. By PETER MARSH and PETER COLLETT. Jonathan Cape, £10.95.

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Peter Collett, is a research officer and member of staff at the Oxford Department of Experimental Psychology. Together, they might be expected to offer a great deal more than a layman's guesswork.

They start by having quite a lot of fun, at the expense of the fluffy dice, etc., that wallies hang in their rear windows, the drive-in churches pioneered by a California preacher, and the useless "bug deflectors" some hopefuls stuck on the front. They liken cars to clothes as forms of conspicuous consumption, and describe the dream machines bespoken by pop stars and other exhibitionists. They quote Scott Fitzgerald and John le Carré. They chronicle drag racing, demolition Derbies, and hot-rodding—with the plumbing left on the outside, as at Beaubourg or Lloyds. Altogether, they provide a retread of mostly American motor folklore, much of it available in scattered form elsewhere, and some of it also referred to in Stephen Bayley's coincidental study of automobile iconography, *Sex, Drink and Fast Cars*—another title to hide on the train.[2]

Where Marsh and Collett, as well as Bayley, score is where they probe more deeply into the symbolism of the car. Although they don't use the words, they clearly regard it as a womb with a vroom: a safe territorial box which permits anti-social behaviour—from aggressive speed to picking one's nose, making rude gestures, or holding up "The Flasher", special cards with opprobrious messages. Some hobbledehoys even "moon" from the back seat, exposing their buttocks as if this degraded the viewer, not the viewed. Sex, obviously enough, has always haunted automobiles, from flivvers and jalopies to full-blown passion wagons; and all three authors make the most of it.

It's aggression and compensation, however, that seem to me the heart of the matter. In hard times, we're told, customers choose sober colours, aping perhaps the gentility of the limousine. As the mechanism becomes more automatic, drivers are given the symbols of greater control. Young people, with no home or work-space of their own, value the car as their first personal territory; and everyone defends it—against crowding, touch, or scratches—as if it were the body itself. Undipped headlights, indeed, operate on the psyche as a hostile animal stare; and the animal names chosen for cars —*Jaguar, Mustang, Cougar, Panther*—are as ego-boosting and potentially lethal as *Scimitar, Rapier*, and *Magnum*, not to mention *Avenger*, which Marsh and Collett unaccountably omit.

This section of their book is aptly entitled "Weapon"; and seeing the way so many people drive, I'm sure the authors are right to put quotations marks round the word "accident" as applied to death on the road. Drivers, they claim, actually seek to achieve a modicum of risk:

> "We tend to avoid actions which put our lives in great jeopardy. Equally, however, we avoid circumstances which are completely safe. In so doing we aim for a balance between the two which keeps our level of arousal up but avoids producing the heart-stopping sensation of uncontrolled fear.
>
> "This balance of risk-taking can be clearly seen on roads all over the world, and it raises serious problems for those trying to institute safety measures. If you make roads safer to drive on—add more lanes, improve the surface and reduce traffic density—people are likely to drive faster. . . . Correspondingly, if people perceive themselves as being in a situation which is too risky, they are likely to change their behaviour so as to reduce the element of risk without eliminating it altogether. To achieve a real improvement in safety it follows that it is necessary to make people think that they are still at risk, even if they are not—an approach which has received far too little attention from those in control of the safety campaigns."

Perhaps, then, road safety really requires my own old favourite nostrum: worse roads and noisier engines. But, given the element of dicing with disaster described by Marsh and Collett, I'll always feel safer on the train. Driving, for me, wins only on cheapness and convenience—which brings me to another piece of recent railway reading: a European opinion poll on the Channel tunnel.

The results, spread over the twelve-nation European Community, show very few "don't knows". Overall, 58% of the Community's population think the Channel tunnel a "good thing". The percentage in favour exceeds that figure in France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain. Denmark and Belgium show slightly less than average support for the project: but the real opponent is Britain.

Here, only 31% of those asked actually approve of the Channel tunnel, while 46% are against. Opposition is greatest among the old, the extremes of Left and Right, and the opponents of the European Community: those in favour are most numerous among men, the young, the moderate Left, and the Community's supporters. But the fact remains that on this subject, at least, the British are notably out of tune with most of their Community partners.

The poll, No. 25 in the Community's *Eurobarometer* series, doesn't seek to explain the British attitude: but recent weeks have revealed a number of reasons. Some fear the tunnel's environmental effects, on Kent and on the area round Waterloo. Some fear that jobs will be lost on the Channel ferries. Others argue that invading animals may bring rabies; others, that terrorists may threaten to blow the tunnel up. A few are willing to voice more atavistic objections—that Britain is an island, and should remain so. The more imaginative add that they like travelling on the ferries because it gives them a sense of adventure.

Although a convinced "European", I agree with all but one of these arguments. I even like pacing the deck of a ferry. Where I disagree is on the fundamental point. I don't believe that Britain should remain an island.

Oh, it's romantic all right; most islands are. But British insularity, in the literal and the figurative sense, has be-

[2] *Sex, Drink and Fast Cars*. By Stephen Bayley. Faber, £3.95.

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devilled British policy ever since World War II. For many years, it fostered the illusion that Britain had escaped the fate of her West European neighbours, diminished by war and dwarfed by the superpowers. It delayed her decision to join a uniting Europe. It lessened her willingness to learn from her partners, as well as to learn their languages. It still encourages half-conscious feelings of superiority, warring with the reluctant realisation that Britain has been less successful, since the War, than either Germany or France. And insularity leads to one final, duller and deeper sense among the British: that, fundamentally, even if they're not superior, then at least they're different in essence from everyone else.

You don't feel this so strongly if you share land frontiers with your neighbours. In France, to go to Germany, all you need do is sling your stuff in the back of the car. Ditto for almost all the Community's land frontiers: I crossed one a few weeks ago which was wholly unmanned at lunchtime. Driving through, one *felt* the unity of Europe. Contrast that with the performance of crossing the Channel: train tickets, boat tickets, boarding card, landing card, passports, immigration control. Even by air it's far less simple than driving. So I welcome the Channel tunnel, despite its drawbacks. Or rather, I would—if it were of the right kind. So far, unfortunately, it's not.

To make a real impact on the British psyche, the tunnel should allow cars to drive through. Even that would preserve some sense of isolation: try taking the Mont Blanc tunnel if you want to feel the thickness of the Alps. But at least one would have the sense that Britain was linked to the European landmass: the sensation would come up, as it were, through the tyres. With the tunnel that's planned, only rail passengers will experience cross-frontier continuity. Drivers will still have to change vehicles, putting their cars on the train. That, like the ferries, will once more dramatise the apparent difference, reinforcing the belief that "they're all foreigners over there".

It may be that technical problems still preclude straight motor traffic. Experts worry about bottlenecks, ventilation, and driver fatigue. My guess is that, once the tunnel's built, all traffic forecasts will prove inadequate; so there may be bottlenecks anyway. By then, too, new problems will have arisen, and old problems may have been solved. Our grandfathers nearly had a Channel tunnel: friends of mine used to keep their deckchairs in its abandoned entrance. Our grandchildren may have a comprehensive one—a real gateway to the Continent. As for ourselves, unfortunately, this is the age of the train.

M

Inter-City

Between the embankment and the Pentecostal Hall
there's a scrag end of grass
with a slide like a watchtower. On a tangled
swing, hugging its chains,
Tracy flips *Love's Raging Fires*.
"Well?

What's it all about?": Sumitra's quizzical,
side-saddle on the seesaw.
"Lot of fuss about nothing", Tracy smiles,
"Want it?"
"You're joking.
Think! My Dad. . . ."
Tracy thinks. The rails

twitch, quicken to a tingling. And the Inter-City
whacks by, thistledown
whipped jiggling in the slipstream. It's half way
to Birmingham (the wispy nothings
drifting down down) before Tracy speaks: "Beats me.

What do your lot *do*?" Sumitra shrugs; she tries
the swing, first tentative,
then powers it. Her pink silks arc and rise,
flare and descend, a gift
(yes, even here) of grace, clouds flounced with fire.

Philip Gross

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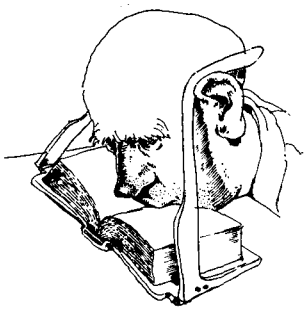
NOTES & TOPICS

The Demonisation of America

Paul Hollander's Work—By ARNOLD BEICHMAN



WHEN André Gide died in 1951—he who had early on discovered the unbearable truth about the Soviet Union—*L'Humanité* began its obituary with the striking sentence: "A corpse has just died." Of the political doctrine which inspired *L'Humanité*, one can perhaps say that here is a corpse that just goes on living. Unlike Gide's work, which won him the 1947 Nobel Prize for literature, the sclerotic tracts of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism have won few, if any, prizes and will win none except among the True Socialist Believers concentrated in the industrial democracies where Marxism, as one Paris critic has said, has been "recently elevated to the status of a hegemonic culture. . . ."[1]

Today, the American university has become the home of TSBs, their locale usually being the "social sciences" and the "humanities". Even university physicists and medical doctors seem to be easily infected by an *ur*-Marxism, the social-science equivalent of tribal medicine.

It is this stratum in American academe that has engaged the probing curiosity of Professor Paul Hollander, the American sociologist. He has written several books on this paradox of hatred for tolerance and slavishness to intolerance found among what would seem to be otherwise reasonably intelligent people. A collection of essays related to political sociology, written over the past two decades and now updated by postscripts, is his most recent work.[2]

Hollander, a Hungarian by origin who managed to survive both the Nazi and Soviet occupations, observes that nowadays "if an American sociologist is neither a quantitative-empiricist nor a structural-functionalist he is likely to become, almost by a process of elimination, a Marxist of some variety. . . ." None of this for Hollander. For him Marxism was quickly discredited as soon as he looked at what was going on around him in his native Hungary. (Apparently the mental mechanisms of self-deception among East Europeans are not so well developed as among their Western counterparts.) As a youth Hollander began to ask questions still relevant to contemporary politics, the kind that are so utterly banal that nobody asks them any more. (But the danger remains that if one forgets the questions, one forgets the answers.)

> "Workers now owned the means of production, the factories where they worked, did they not? If so, why were they searched for stolen goods on the way out at the gates. Would they steal from themselves?
>
> By whom were they searched or arrested if they tried to strike, if they criticised their wages or working conditions? By other workers temporarily doing duty for 'the armed militia' Lenin spoke of. . . ?
>
> And if the workers were the new masters of the land and their lives, why did they go to work on streetcars or on bicycles while the managers of the factories . . . were driven to work in chauffeured limousines?
>
> Why was it necessary to jam foreign radio broadcasts, prevent access to foreign newspapers, purge the libraries and bookshops, and literally fence in the whole nation?"

These questions are surely as topical as they have been since the day Lenin wrote:

> "When we [the Bolsheviks] established the dictatorship of the proletariat the workers became more hungry, and their standard of living went down. The victory of the workers is impossible without sacrifices, without a temporary worsening of their situation. . . .[3]

To cite Hollander's queries or to quote morsels from Lenin usually elicits from TSBs the time-honoured protest against calling the USSR or Moscow's East European vassals "socialist". Some TSBs will even go so far as to say (as Hollander writes) that "these countries, and the Soviet Union in particular, are not only not socialist, but have besmirched the good name of socialism." These putative socialist lands, some TSBs will concede, "have become highly coercive: the powers of the state flowered, not withered."

There is, however, a peculiarity which I have long noted about all this yielding and conceding. You would think that when a TSB accepts criticism of the USSR as valid, there would then follow loud, heartbreaking renditions of the old

[1] Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Barbarism With A Human Face* (New York, 1979), p. 64.

[2] Paul Hollander, *The Many Faces of Socialism: Essays in Comparative Sociology and Politics* (Transaction Books, 1983).

[3] V. I. Lenin, in *Revolutionary Russia*, ed. Richard Pipes (Harvard, 1968), p. 340.

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battle-cry (first heard during Jacobin days in France of the 1790s): "The revolution has been betrayed!" Not at all. No critical analysis, not to mention a concerted anti-Soviet campaign, ever emerges from the progressive, enlightened TSB sector of American intellectual life, no matter how many times—Hungary, Poland, Sakharov, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan—the USSR may be deemed to have "compromised" its socialist principles.

For TSBs, US foreign policy is always imperialist, and therefore a permanent abomination. Because the Soviet Union is *au fond* socialist, it therefore cannot be imperialist. As a result, Soviet foreign policy (especially, nowadays, in Central America) is always a response to Yankee provocation. While TSBs always relate the evils of US foreign policy to the evils of US capitalism, the sometimes admitted shortcomings of Soviet socialism are always unrelated to Soviet foreign policy. The growing regiment of American Marxists, always ready to indict their country for brutal mistreatment of blacks, rarely finds time to utter a discouraging word about the Soviet Union's persecution of Jews and other religious minorities. For a brief moment, they were for Poland's *Solidarity* . . . until they were told that it was really a fraudulent labour movement controlled by the reactionary, obscurantist Catholic Church. Bye-bye, *Solidarnosc*.

To TSBs, immoral behaviour by an inherently moral entity like the USSR is never immoral and always ultimately vindicable while moral behaviour by an inherently immoral entity like the USA is always immoral and never vindicable. Because of the cultural efficiency of what has emerged as the First Law of True Socialism, a TSB professor can write the following and not be laughed out of the academy:

> "The social university is not primarily concerned with the abstract pursuit of scholarship, but with the utilisation of knowledge obtained through scholarship to obtain social change. Therefore, it does not recognise the right of its members to do anything they wish under the name of academic freedom; instead it assumes that all its members are committed to social change. To give an example, a course in riot control would simply be declared out of place in such a university, while a course in methods of rioting might be perfectly appropriate."[4]

Even among the most devoted advocates of Women's Lib or Gay Rights, there is rarely criticism of the USSR for ignoring the rights of women or of homosexuals. Castro's *macho* mistreatment of homosexuals is ignored. The absence of women from high Party or government positions in socialist countries is a scandal easily overlooked, especially by those who wept over the exquisite martyrdom of the Vice-Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro. Deficiencies like "the cult of personality", as explicated in 1956 by Nikita Khrushchev in his almost forgotten anti-Stalin speech, are minor aberrations on a road depraved with good intentions.

HOW CAN SUCH behavioural contradictions be? One answer, of course, is that however much the USSR may have "betrayed" socialism, that country nevertheless is still a Marxist country. For our academic Marxists that makes the USSR morally superior to the USA no matter how scandalising Soviet behaviour sometimes is. Perhaps the USSR has betrayed "socialism", but is it not a country which is still programmed by Marxist theorems? So there is always hope for a renaissance. How can there be such hope for a capitalist America, whose very existence offends the apodictic validity of Marx's and Lenin's "laws of history"?

Anti-Americanism in the West unaccompanied by an underlying devotion to Marxism or Marxism-Leninism is no more possible than (in Leszek Kolakowski's phrase about the possibility of a "Humanist Communism") fried snowballs. Marxism and anti-Americanism are today inseparable. I know of no Marxist whose anti-Americanism is remotely equalled, let alone exceeded, by his anti-Soviet politics (and I would today include even the so-called Trotskyite militants). The Socialist International is deeply infused with anti-Americanism and pro-Sovietism. A sort of Marxism-Calvinism has ruled that the USSR lives within "the laws of history", which makes salvation by the grace of history possible, while the USA, violative of those "laws", is doomed to historical perdition. And yet, in American political culture today, few call themselves Communists. And even if one does—as Angela Davis, an avowed Communist and official Communist political candidate, has done—newspapers are afflicted by fears of being called "McCarthyite" and are uneasy about naming names. The Stanford University daily newspaper, in a report of a campus speech by Ms Davis, described her as an "activist" even though she was properly introduced as a Communist. Few academicians (Harvard's History Department chairman, John Womack, is an exception) publicly describe themselves as Communist; but they do relish the idea of being called Marxists. Has "Marxism" become a kind of code-word for Communism?

THAT THERE ARE TODAY many varieties of "socialism", all on paper, no longer matters except to organisers of "Conferences of Marxist Scholarship". The adjectival prefixes, of course, prove that socialism is a living doctrine. So we have "socialism" preceded by the following adjectives, as Hollander lists them (plus some of my own): . . . administrative, bureaucratic, centrally planned, command, communal, centralised, decentralised, feminist, left, liberation, market, mobilisational, orthodox, peasant, reformist, revisionist, revolutionary, right, statist—and, of course, African, Asian, Christian, Indian, Latin American, Gramscian, Trotskyite, and on and on into the black night of totalitarianism. . . .

[4] Alan Wolfe, "The Myth of the Free Scholar", *The Centre Magazine* (July 1969), p. 77. This same academician a decade or so later denounced (then US Ambassador) Jeane J. Kirkpatrick's alleged relationship to the CIA. The "relationship" was established (via the pages of *The Nation*, the New York weekly) in the following fashion: Mrs Kirkpatrick's husband, Professor Evron Kirkpatrick, was related to a former CIA executive named Lyman Kirkpatrick. It turned out that the men were not related either by blood or marriage; all they shared was a surname. So much for "scholarship to obtain social change".

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There may even be 57 varieties of socialism, but when it comes to Marxist-Leninist doctrine it is the one ideology which cannot be amended, or discarded, or redefined. Deng Xiao-ping may announce that Marxism doesn't have all the answers so let "a hundred Marxisms" bloom—but he doesn't say let a hundred Leninisms bloom. There is only one Leninism; and it cannot be buried, ignored, or repealed. It is the sole "legitimating" principle of all socialist dictatorships. And it is to Leninism that today's Marxists owe their overriding loyalty because they know that full, real and true socialism is not likely to come to the United States or any other democracy via free and popular elections. There are simply too many refugees, émigrés and "boat people" to allow such an electoral eventuality, and perhaps even too much plain common sense in the broad masses (as Portugal and Spain suggest).

PAUL HOLLANDER points out that the East European socialist systems are especially attractive to American social scientists because they tend to confirm for them, at least to some degree, the evolution of socialist systems in a direction appealing to Western liberal-Left sensitivities. In the 1950s, it was Tito's schismatic Yugoslavia; that didn't last. Then followed Mao's China, Castro's Cuba, embattled Ho Chi-minh's North Viet Nam. Today it is Hungary. If only Mongolia, Albania, or North Korea would allow delegations of US political scientists to tour their still shuttered utopias, one can be certain there would be an outpouring of joyful reports (*A New Civilisation?*) reminiscent of the Webbs, those paradigmatic political pilgrims of the Stalin century. It is to be noted that all these lands, whether immediately loyal to Moscow or not, share one common attribute—a monocratic party and ideology.

The general tendency among American social scientists, says Paul Hollander, is "to be more inclined to optimism in regard to the future of societies other than their own." This optimism, he says, applies especially to the future of Soviet and East European societies. These same social scientists rarely explore with the same passion the *legitimacy* of socialist régimes as they do that of capitalist democracies. Most, says Hollander, "assume that the régimes in question enjoy substantial legitimacy and the matter, therefore, needs little further exploration."

> ". . . Western research into the legitimacy of socialist systems is avoided because of the criticism it implies. Investigating and thus questioning the legitimacy of such systems by Western social scientists is likely to be seen as an unfriendly gesture equated with a revival of the cold war spirit. An expressed interest in legitimacy would also undercut other opportunities for research in socialist countries. . . ."

[5] *Journal of the Marquis de Custine* (ed. and tr. Kohler 1951), p. 132.

[6] For a more recent analysis of this phenomenon, see Kenneth Minogue, "Anti-Americanism: A View From London", in *The National Interest* (Spring 1986).

HOW, THEN, has the USA become a world scapegoat? Hollander's analysis of "Anti-Americanism" isolates five major attributes which help make it the most likely candidate for opprobrium. The first is, curiously enough, that "Too much is known about the United States." It is indeed a major disadvantage for a world power. As the Marquis de Custine once perceptively noted in his *Russia in 1839*:

> "If better diplomats are found among the Russians than among highly civilized peoples, it is because our papers warn them of everything that happens and everything that is contemplated in our countries. Instead of disguising our weaknesses with prudence, we reveal them with vehemence every morning; whereas, the Russians' Byzantine policy, working in the shadow, carefully conceals from us all that is thought, done, and feared in their country. We proceed in broad daylight; they advance under cover: the game is one-sided. The ignorance in which they leave us blinds us; our sincerity enlightens them; we have the weakness of loquacity; they have the strength of secrecy."[5]

The second and third factors are American affluence (envy is a bottomless pit) and its pervasive global presence (how can balalaika players ever hold out against swinging rock groups?). The fourth factor is the very anti-Americanism of the Americans themselves.[6] As I turned from Hollander's sociology to the "fun pages" of *The New Yorker*, once so urbane and witty, I found yet another bit of evidence for the guilt-ridden phenomenon of the American longing to be responsible and reviled. In its 9 June 1986 "Notes and Comments" the magazine argues:

> "Having, as we believe, turned Europe into a danger zone, we now shun the place, leaving the Europeans to pay whatever price is to be paid."

It is "we" who have "turned Europe into a danger zone". Not Colonel Gaddafi, not the PLO, with their Rome and Vienna airport massacres, the bombing of the West Berlin discothèque, the murder on the *Achille Lauro*, the El-Al bomb incident, etc. Who is the first "we" and who the second? *The New Yorker*'s syntax, like its politics, isn't what it used to be.

Finally, there is the fifth factor, an element most rare in the history of empires—the peculiar American combina-

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tion of great power with the weakened will to use it.

The work of Paul Hollander represents social criticism at its best.[7] It also suggests that the foreigner, the "green-horn" or the "tourist"—think of Tocqueville, de Custine, Schumpeter, Jean-François Revel, *et al.*—often see open societies (and indeed closed ones) more clearly, more profoundly than the alienated spirits of a self-imposed internal exile. The claim is "the betterment of one's own society"; but between reform and rancour, between ideas and ideology, falls a great shadow.

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

The Sociological Snark

IDEOLOGY is the quintessential example of one of those familiar notions whose apparent clarity blurs when we attempt a precise definition. Coined at the very end of the 18th century, the term *idéologie* originally designated the study of the formation of ideas (in the simple sense of mental representations), and then came to stand for the school of philosophy which devoted itself, with the usual lack of success, to that study. It was Marx and Engels, 50 years later, who infused the concept of *idéologie* with the wealth and at the time the confusion of meaning which it bears to this day.

Ideology became the broad set of the notions and values which act to justify the domination of one social class by another. Ideology, according to Marxist theory, is bound to be a lie, but it does not exclude sincerity, since the social class which it favours actually believes in that lie. (This is what Engels called "false consciousness".) To cap it all, the lie may appear equally true to the oppressed and exploited class, by an aberration identified by a further and equally successful coinage, namely "alienation". In the broad sense, ideology may embrace not only political or economic concepts but moral, religious, familial and aesthetic values, law, sport, cooking, the circus, and the chess-board.

This summary account obscures a host of problems which have kept sociology busy for a century and which Raymond Boudon, one of the most rigorous of contemporary French sociologists, has now attempted in *L'idéologie* (Fayard), to resolve in his turn.[1]

Ideology does seem to have been born under a contradictory star. If it is all lies and illusion, how can it *work*? Although ideology has certain features which may justify describing it as irrational, the fact remains that many ideologues claim, and not always wrongly, that their case is based on some sort of scientific argumentation. To be sure, they refuse to pay heed to any inconvenient facts or arguments, which is the negation of the scientific spirit; and their thinking mostly culminates in the sort of irrational ratiocination which we call in French "*langue de bois*", and which might in this context be termed "socio-babble".

Nevertheless, every ideologue believes—and manages to instil the belief—that he has possession of an overall explanatory system based on objective proofs. Marx, at any rate, eventually incorporated this aspect into his theory. No matter, reply sociologists as eminent as Talcott Parsons, Raymond Aron or Edward Shils—ideology never has to do with the distinction between true and false . . . it is an indissoluble blend of observations of partial facts, selected for the needs of the cause, and emotive value-judgments which are expressions of fanaticism rather than knowledge. For Shils the growth and influence of the ideologue is akin to that of the prophet or the religious reformer, not at all to that of the scholar, even of the most delinquent variety.

AN IMMEDIATE OBJECTION comes to mind: should we not draw a distinction between religions and ideologies? Yes, but there are religious reformers, such as Savonarola or Khomeini, who extend their religion into a political and social ideology, served by a totalitist exercise of power. Similarly, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the persecution of the Protestants by Louis XIV could be seen as an ideological as much as a religious action, since the notion of "the divine right of Kings" bestowed on Roman Catholicism the function of legitimising the absolutism of political power. When prophets lapse into ideology, they are transformed into men of action and political leaders.

The explanation by *fanatisme pur*, Boudon rightly observes, does not provide an adequate account of what an ideological system is, or of its ability to operate in reality. That is why we come back to the point of departure: ideology always contains, if not a rational, then at any rate a *comprehensible* element (as Max Weber used to say), and a degree of effectiveness. That is all the more necessary because ideology—and this is one of its key components—must work upon the masses and make them active. Occasionally it shapes an entire civilisation, or at least a social or cultural segment—intellectuals, managers, workers, students.

You cannot even begin to talk of ideology except in the presence of collective beliefs. The solitary ideologue is relatively harmless. Ideology was for Lenin (and remains for his successors) a weapon to be wielded in the class struggle and on behalf of the world-wide triumph of revolution. It is therefore far more militant than sheer prejudice, comforting illusions, everyday terror, absolutory excuses, dotty obsessions, or received ideas, although it includes and is fed by

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[7] See, in ENCOUNTER, Paul Hollander's articles "Pilgrims on the Run" (October and November 1981) and "Ideological Pilgrims" (January 1986)—now collected in ENCOUNTER Pamphlet No. 16, *Pilgrims on the Run*, available from 44 Great Windmill Street, London W1V 7PA, £2.00, $3.50, plus 50p/$1.00 per copy for postage—and "The Ideological Pilgrim" (November 1973).

[1] *L'idéologie*. By RAYMOND BOUDON. Fayard.

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all these. (I am surprised, incidentally, that Raymond Boudon has sub-titled his book *L'origine des idées reçues*, because the received idea can be passive, whereas ideology is always active.)

THE READER IS LEFT a little unsatisfied by all these generalities. Exhaustive and subtle as Boudon is in his critical analysis of the sociological explanations of ideology, in my opinion he ought to have delved further beyond the boundaries of his speciality. Sociologists seldom rise above the level of the respectably commonplace; sometimes it is the moralists, and the novelists, whose works recreate the mystery of ideological crystallisation in all its dreadful plenitude. I won't go into classics too well known to require any comment—the Grand Inquisitor of *The Brothers Karamazov, The Possessed*—but E. M. Cioran's work affords some stimulating insights into ideology, for instance in his *Généalogie du fanatisme*, the *Précis de décomposition* and *Histoire et utopie*. Why not look for examples in more recent literature—say, in Mario Vargas Llosa's latest novel, *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta*,[2] a superb and stunning picture of the birth and growth of a terrorist ideology within a group. The novelist brings us up against the concrete case, lived out by individuals, of a vision which is simultaneously crazed yet rational (here I agree with Boudon), but above all a vision which is translated into deeds. This could be the story of the founders of the Peruvian *Sendero Luminoso*, or of those Maoist philosophy teachers convinced (as with the Khmers Rouges) that they have the right to wipe out all those who get in the way of their plans.

For ideology is a blend of powerful emotions and simple ideas yoked to a form of behaviour. It is both intolerant and contradictory. Intolerant because it cannot bear the existence of anything outside itself—contradictory because it is endowed with the strange faculty of acting in a manner opposed to its principles without any sense of betraying them. Nor does repeated failure ever cause them to re-examine these principles; instead, they are ever more radically applied.

Raymond Boudon certainly produces some enlightening studies of historical or contemporary cases of ideology: he reflects on Augustin Cochin's *Esprit du jacobinisme*, on some ideas of the Third World and "the theory of dependence", and on the Lysenko affair. In dealing with the last, it seems to me that he underestimates two characteristics of ideological behaviour. One is abstract loyalty to orthodoxy, even if "praxis" has to be sacrificed to it.

> "For it is extremely true [wrote Jacques Monod] that the fundamental basis of classical genetics is incompatible both with the spirit and the letter of the dialectic of nature according to Engels."

From another aspect, implementation of Lysenkoist theories was one of the causes of the backwardness of Soviet agriculture[3]—a fine example of the indifference of ideologues to rebuttals inflicted by reality.

How are we to explain the "rationality" of this kind of suicidal ideology? Raymond Boudon excels above all when he displays the ravages of ideology in sociology itself, and in the philosophy of science. His dissection of a number of books which were very much in fashion during the past quarter-century gives yet another measure of the extent of the drives "which bestow upon received ideas the authority of science", even in intellectual circles. The furious, dogmatic reaction of the present-day ideologues of "anti-psychiatry" to discoveries about the organic origins of schizophrenia is a good illustration of this "*dérivation*" (as Pareto would have called it), as is the learned charlatanism of the first racist theories, at the end of the 19th century. When Boudon traces the causes of the failure of a campaign for contraception in India, he locates them convincingly in the prejudices of the Western sociologists dispatched to work there, not necessarily in those of the local peasants.

All in all, Raymond Boudon has written a competent, penetrating study, not so much of the sociology of ideology as of the ideologies of sociologists.

[2] *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta*. By MARIO VARGAS LLOSA. Faber, £9.95.

[3] I recommend a thorough and interesting paperback account: *L'affaire Lyssenko*. By J. and D. KOTEK. Complexe.

Gielgud

By Laurence Kitchin

TO ENJOY OR to judge theatre acting it's necessary to be part of the audience, and because of that the celebrations of Sir John Gielgud's eightieth birthday in 1984 lacked an important element, in fact the most important element of all. For most of those writing or speaking about him were too young to have seen his most significant work—although he offered some glimpse of it as presenter on television of a survey of English verse. It was securely rooted in a tradition which ceased to exist when the natural successors—Richard Burton, Albert Finney and Peter O'Toole—were dispersed by film and television activity enough to prevent them reaching their full potential in the "classics", meaning theatre pieces from Shakespeare to Wilde, against which actors in the past had been expected to measure their skills. Veterans like Gielgud backed by decades of experience at that level have had no difficulty in adapting to David Storey or Harold Pinter, so there's a temptation to measure the iceberg by its tip.

Any attempt at placing Gielgud's achievement simply as an actor is up against the fact that data on film are scarce. That leaves his peak, Hamlet, never excelled and rarely approached, at the mercy of theatre critics and their responses. From Hazlitt to Shaw and Agate it was possible to

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arrive at something like a consensus by collating such opinions. A tradition of heroic acting was still in being, enough to detect innovations and compare authoritative performances. Moreover the critics had ample space, whereas after World War II they were expected to cover three or four shows a week in such a way as to encourage glossy phrase-making at the expense of an extended critique. Not much is to be learned from a 300-word analysis of a long Shakespeare part written by a journalist immersed in contemporary show-business, as opposed to the work of a critic with enough room to stretch himself and, in the case of a Shaw, a MacCarthy or a Hazlitt, with interests far wider than the drama. That was why I was able to write in 1960 that Gielgud "has outstripped the supply of criticism competent to deal with it".

By that time the day was long past when Shaw could invite Desmond MacCarthy to lunch in order to mull over a notice entitled "The Heart Dies before the Head", and theatre critics were beginning to rate only equal space with those covering film and TV. Not only had Gielgud at 56 bowed out of his major roles, but the brief period of letting words and physical action dominate in Shakespeare was on its way out. Instead, visual effects, appropriate to actors and audiences used to other media, were moving gradually towards Trevor Nunn's High-Tech exploits of 1984. It was as if we were back in Victorian days of scenic elaboration, but with mechanical innovations instead of Alma Tadema.

Anyone hoping to "place" Gielgud will need to strain historical imagination backwards through the fragmentation of authoritative drama criticism, the High-Tech innovations, and a good deal more. The sociology of theatre-going, for example, has never been other than sketchy. You might think that market research would have been in the interests of managements. One provincial company did receive a Gulbenkian grant for the purpose. Some promising fieldwork was done, but the report was rejected as unsatisfactorily presented. Among the few discoveries made public was the paucity of working-class attendance. Soccer was drawing big crowds at the time, and it was no surprise to learn that nothing resembling the social mix of Shakespeare's Globe was converging on the theatres, though it seemed odd that advocates of "theatre in the round", audience participation, and the like, disregarded the existence of those in any football stadium.

Just what was the composition of a theatre audience a mere quarter-century ago is uncertain, therefore, and likely to remain so. What we can be sure of is increasing dislike of the type of playhouse in which Gielgud learned his art. There were two main reasons.

First, the TV habit brought about a revolution in drama optics. Audiences got used to a horizontal angle of vision, adaptable to a place in the circle, though not to a downwards tunnel view from the galleries, which were often taken over by lighting equipment. Actors' projection, too, became a problem. If you were near to the stage the mechanics of projection were obtrusive; if at the back, being accustomed to the nuances of the film close-up, you felt you were missing something.

The second reason for dissatisfaction was a director's difficulty in handling casts who hadn't served an apprenticeship in live performance. Even an O'Toole or a Finney, who had, would have picked up screen habits and tended to overcorrect them when back in a theatre. The others would mostly be used to the microphone, their deficiencies conveniently masked by the cult of visual staging. With the crucial exception of opera and dance, attacks were mounted on the proscenium. In fact it was no more than a scapegoat, concealing a deep anxiety among directors about the defection of audiences to other media. If you took to a thrust or arena stage, went the jargon, there'd be more audience "involvement", though that wasn't lacking for opera and ballet. Back of it all was a naive hope of holding on to straight theatre audiences by getting physically close to them, sometimes literally within spitting distance. That confidence in this solution was less than total was noted in 1983 when the Beaumont Theater at New York's Lincoln Center announced that it was restructuring and putting a proscenium *in*.

During these post-War developments of tabloid criticism, new visual technology, actors, directors and audiences conditioned by the screen and anti-proscenium acting areas, Gielgud rounded off his exploration of major classical roles, added Angelo, Cassius, Benedick and Leontes, and finally emerged as the versatile small-scale performer still active today. He had been continually involved as director, or as an actor in ephemeral West End trifles such as minor Coward. People too young to have witnessed them were given samples of his major roles in a verse recital, *The Ages of Man*. He was a survivor from other conditions and an obsolete tradition. Never an impersonator, he was, as he told an interviewer, "always myself"—even on stage, in fact, the politely self-contained focus of the recent birthday celebrations. To have stayed like that after, say, two decades of retirement in the country would be understandable. For a dyed-in-the-wool theatre man adaptable to recent drama fashions such as the Pinter idiom, it is extraordinary.

A UNIQUE LATE EXAMPLE of his venturing outside his range was the Stratford *Othello* of 1961, in which, for the only time I remember, he drew laughs in the wrong place. A matinee party of schoolgirls tittered where Othello throws a fit. Gielgud, of course, was never an actor to lie raving on the floor, but there's also a good deal of the Tudor courtier in that role and there he was memorable, notably in the rhetorical set-pieces. The episode was taken by some as confirmation that "his acting lacks stomach and a heart"—the opinion of Kenneth Tynan, a critic interested in bullfighting, and writing at a time when Artaud and "visceral" theatre were much admired. Lack of "stomach", whatever that is taken to mean, sits oddly on a career of such staying power over several decades in lengthy roles. "Heart", of course, is central to parts of his Hamlet, much of Benedick, the surfacing of humanity in Leontes and Prospero, above all in the later stages of Lear—that is, if audience reaction over the years means anything.

Still, the Othello, only 25 years back and within the ex-

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perience of some critics now active, helps towards a sketchy definition. We're not to credit Gielgud with emotional convulsion, martial glamour, the power of a Lawson or Wolfit, or the beefy, extrovert presence of Richardson or Tearle. Confining ourselves to English classics, what does that leave? Well, apart from Shakespeare, there are Congreve, Sheridan and Wilde to be taken into account. Gielgud once defined style as "knowing what kind of play you're in". In the absence of film record, posterity will have to make do with stills and the assurance that success in those three was based on making the dialogue sound natural, oddly enough on the appreciation of *literature*. That's what is meant by an actor measuring himself against the text, and where those classics of comedy are involved Gielgud in this century has done it best. After all, Congreve's diction is baroque, Sheridan's fluently mannered and Wilde's an invention imposed on totally empty people.

Included in these was a devastating later version of his Joseph Surface, accurately in period as usual without overelaboration in gesture or dress, but recalling the built-in hypocrisy of TV villains in executive suits. In one scene he was profiled on the audience as a tough, plausible manipulator, interviewing his brother while seated behind an elegant desk. But his triumphs extended to Shakespeare comedy too, as Benedick in *Much Ado*. The duels with Beatrice, none too easy to handle because of the abstruse wordplay, came across with sunny fluency. Neither actors nor audience were in need of the modernising touches put into a National Theatre production of the play, admittedly some years later when hearing and speaking were in decline. In the episode where Benedick is subjected to an overheard conversation designed to make him think Beatrice loves him, Gielgud brought off the almost impossible by sharing his surprise with the audience, exhibiting himself to them as deluded victim of the plot, and at the same time conveying more than a hint of detached enjoyment of the total stage effect, a complicity with the audience itself.

Getting back finally to *Hamlet*, it's evident that if Gielgud's career had ended at the start of the 1939 War, he would have been immortal for that role alone. And it's half a century back, in an unrecognisably different society. When Gielgud, already an experienced actor at the age of twenty-five, joined the Old Vic in 1929, Thomas Hardy had been dead less than a year, D. H. Lawrence was still alive, Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* came out in the same year, and Eliot was yet to begin *The Four Quartets*. As to Shakespeare, ham actor-managers were still touring *Hamlet* in sermonising slow tempo with the last entrance of Fortinbras cut. Where Gielgud struck lucky was in having for his director Harcourt Williams, a disciple of Granville Barker committed to the minimum of visuals and aiming to let the words do the work, above all fast. Barker, one of the most literate directors on record, as his *Prefaces* were to prove, insisted on textual integrity, so Gielgud acted a complete version of *Hamlet* which took four-and-a-half hours. At least in a physical sense, the "stomach", the incredible stamina, was developed as early as that.

The interpretation's outlines were set in 1934 in a West End run of 155 performances under Gielgud's own management. Critical descriptions of it abound, and fortunately there are later radio versions to confirm the supreme excellence of the diction, notably where Shakespeare provides the equivalent of arias in opera. Such interplay with a public encouraged to listen was possible before film and TV perspective took over.

It is true that there were cold 1930s overtones to his Hamlet. Not, however, in June 1939, when he played it at the Lyceum to mark its imminent conversion to a dance-hall. Then, inspired by the association of his Terry ancestry with the place, he broadened and set fire to his performance in a way that those of us who were present in the 2,800 capacity auditorium will never forget.

What Gielgud had done was to bridge a yawning gap between the 20th-century theatre and Shakespeare's text, no less. He had brought playgoing and dramatic literature together.

Witch-Hunt

Walking in yew-tree dawn is
bloody, knowing immediately
enemies are there; night has
temporarily only hidden them
and, as those kitchen cockroaches,
the cracks show they still thrive

there. With nervy heart pulsings
they're assessed bleakly, no need
to communicate with self before
they conform in ranks. At least a
something moves there; somewhere
is living. Or is that spot on
the move merely an optic fault?
The cockroach scuttle is ugly
but not dangerous—is that what
being is—to be crushed underfoot?
Stop the questions there are no
answers . . . get to the door as quick

as time; do not hesitate, do not
look back. A smear does not die,
like myth, it's for ever-after.
Is passed on, part of a portrayal,
biography; it is as well to say
your friends are also your enemies.

Madge Hales

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A Special Book Section

Stage & Screen

An Intellectual in the Theatre

On Jonathan Miller—By JOHN WEIGHTMAN

THE THEATRE, although it may occasionally accommodate "the drama of ideas", is not, by and large, an intellectual institution. On the contrary, its basic stock-in-trade is emotion and, even in its commercial manifestations, it stands in a passionate relationship to society. Great theatrical successes correspond to mysterious currents of collective excitement, and are always unpredictable. Most actors may have a university education nowadays, but they are still primarily exhibitionists, bending the whole of their personalities to the manic end of displaying themselves in the guise of the Other. The last half-century, it is true, has seen the dawn of a new, quasi-theoretical seriousness in the theatre, but its gurus have tended to promote numinous, rather than definable, concepts of their craft; hence those teasing entities, the Theatre of Cruelty, the Living Theatre, the Poor Theatre, the Empty Space. . . .

Against this background, Jonathan Miller stands out as a remarkable exception. As we know from his appearances on television, he is first and foremost an encyclopaedic intellectual who, but for the unexpected amateur triumph of *Beyond the Fringe*, would probably have continued his academic career in medical (and allied) research. But, since 1961, when the *Fringe* quartet shot to fame like a theatrical preliminary to the Beatles, he has found himself tied to a theatre-obsessed *alter ego*, from whom he has struggled occasionally, though in vain, to escape. It is significant, however, that—almost immediately—he switched from performing to directing, since the director's function, as he understands it, is precisely to ensure the intellectual relevance and coherence of the waves of emotion emanating from the stage. Or perhaps, reversing the angle of vision, we could say that, within the theatre, he has found his particular performing role: that of the indefatigable academic, maintaining a flow of knowledge and ideas in the thespian hurly-burly—a sort of intellectual missionary *in partibus*.

Subsequent Performances,[1] an expanded and generously illustrated version of the T. S. Eliot Memorial Lectures given in the University of Kent and of the Clark Lectures delivered in Cambridge, is the fruit of a temporary return to academe, during which Mr Miller distilled some of the conclusions suggested by his 25 years of practical experience. It is essentially a defence and illustration of the function of the director. Mr Miller is justifying his own career but, in doing so, he subjects the theatrical process to a rational analysis which relates it to the philosophy of art and the history of culture.

HE BEGINS BY ASKING FRANKLY: are people like myself really necessary? He is referring, of course, to the relatively new phenomenon of the director as a separate entity, and also to the director who is mainly concerned with revivals of works from the past (hence his title), since this is the area in which he himself has chiefly operated. The putting on of new plays is a rather different matter; the author can usually make his presence felt, and the nature of the performance will be determined by the collaboration, or the battle of wills, between him and the director, or between him, the director, and the actors. Traditionally, the author often was—and may still be today—his own director or actor-manager (cf. Shakespeare, Molière, Sacha Guitry, Noël Coward, Alan Ayckbourn, etc.), in which case there is no immediate problem, since the performance presumably corresponds, as far as is humanly possible, to the intentions of its original begetter.

But there is, or will be, a problem, once the author is dead and his plays are floating free in the cultural heritage. It is a sad fact, of course, that the great majority of them die almost at once, together with the ephemeral social situation, of which, in retrospect, they often appear to have been a strangely conventional, collective and almost anonymous, emanation. The mortality rate among dramatic works must be higher than any other form of art; and nothing produces a bleaker awareness of human transience than the perusal of

[1] *Subsequent Performances*. By JONATHAN MILLER. Faber and Faber, £14.95.

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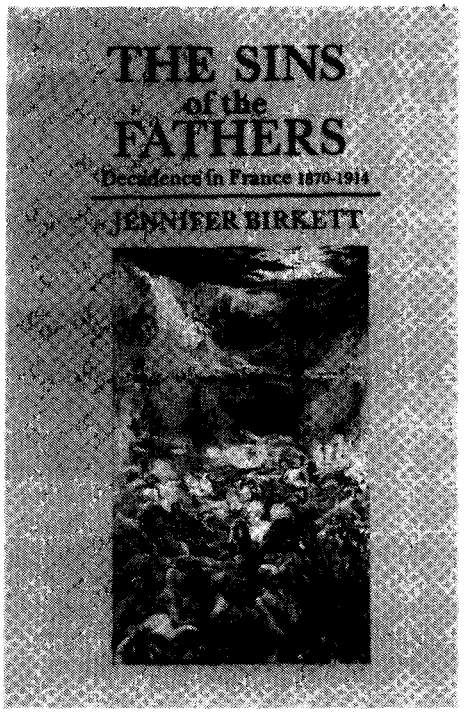

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anthologies of the great theatrical successes of yester-year. But a few plays "survive", and even become classics, that is, can be given a new form of existence, in a different social context, through the efforts of theatrical enthusiasts, among whom the director is now especially prominent.

Some critics of standing—Mr Miller quotes in particular the late Dame Helen Gardner—have queried the new importance of the director. Dame Helen declared that the Shakespearian performances she saw in her youth did very well without him but (as Mr Miller points out) she may have been remembering, or misremembering, with nostalgia. However, it is undoubtedly true that the director is often looked upon as a sort of cuckoo in the theatrical nest, a half-creator twisting the playwright's intentions in order to express the quirks of his own temperament, a nuisance to the actors who may resent his presence, and an obtrusive screen separating the bemused audience from the objective reality of the original play.

Jonathan Miller admits the validity of these charges in the case of some directors or some of their work. He instances a modern American production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, which turned the play inside out to transform it into a feminist tract. My favourite example is a wonderfully preposterous French version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, put on some years ago by Ariane Mnouchkine at the Cirque Medrano. For no discernible reason, the open space was entirely carpeted with sheep-skins, and the actors moved as in a trance, with the stiffly hieratic gestures of the characters in *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*, an avant-garde film which was then in vogue, and was deemed to be "oneiric" and so presumably relevant to Shakespeare's *Dream*. But Mr Miller helps us to see how such weird excesses can come about by going to the root of the matter and asking the vital question: in what sense, if any, does the play have an objective reality?

COMMON SENSE, which is not always the best intellectual guide, may lead us to suppose, for instance, that there is a play by Shakespeare called *Hamlet*, which can readily be performed if a suitable contingent of actors is assembled. In fact, all we have to go on is a basic text, marvellous no doubt, but containing little or no information about stage business, the tones of voice in which the speeches should be delivered, or the ultimate "meaning" of the speeches which, on examination, usually turn out to be richly ambiguous. Also, since the text comes to us from the past which (in L. P. Hartley's phrase) is "another country", we can only speculate, with more or less confidence, about what it signified for the author and his audience in the cultural atmosphere of its time. Furthermore, given what we now know about the uncertain interplay between language and the minds of authors, it could be that Shakespeare wrote into the play implications of which he himself was not fully aware, or did not really intend, but which we cannot help seeing there today.

Pursuing this line of thought, we may quickly exchange the commonsense view for an exciting or alarming vision of the problematic nature of the performance of any work inherited from the past. We might say—and, indeed, Mr Miller eventually does say—that such a play can *never* be performed in the full sense, because the text has become a cluster of potentialities, not all of which can be realised simultaneously in the same production. There is no single, unitary play called *Hamlet*; each performance will be, to a greater or lesser extent, a different play. Mr Miller drives the point home with donnish precision:

> "In the effort to discover *something* in which the existence of a play could be said to consist, the suggestion is sometimes made that each work should be identified with an ideal performance, that is to say with no actual performance but with the best imaginable one. But it is always logically possible to imagine a better performance than any particular one claiming that status. . . . Great plays seem to be capable of an almost infinite number of alternative performances. . . . One of the reasons why Shakespeare continues to be performed is not that there *is* a central realisable intention in each play that we still continue to value, but because we are still looking for the possibility of unforeseen meanings."

THESE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS, he maintains, have been fully understood in the theatre only during the last generation or so, thanks to the rapid growth of our awareness of historical and cultural relativism. Before that, things were left very much to chance, with fashions in performance changing slowly and, as it were, by accident. But we now see that each classical play poses a problem of interpretation, to which it is the director's business to give a convincing modern solution, in collaboration with the actors. If the task is left to the actors alone, the outcome may be a featureless muddle, or the performer with the strongest personality or the loudest voice will prevail, and become in effect an official director or actor-manager, with more or less happy results. The non-acting director has his place, then, as a clarifying intelligence and a unifying sensibility.

What Jonathan Miller omits to say—no doubt through modesty—is that, to play his part effectively, the non-acting director presumably also has to have as strong a theatrical gift and as robust an egotism as any member of the company he is serving. But he does insist that the director, in spite of his analytical and pedagogical function, should remain irredeemably "theatrical", in the sense that, in the end, he has to trust his personal flair. It is interesting to see that Mr Miller is not a whole-hearted supporter of institutions such as the National Theatre, whose size and collective bureaucratic seriousness tend to generate stolid, middlebrow productions lacking in some essential histrionic vitamin. This may be a permanently insoluble problem: out of respect for the theatre, nations have an urge to enshrine it in an official monument—the National, the Comédie Française, the Bolshoi—only to find perhaps that, whatever the conventional success of these institutions, the vital spark glows less brightly there than in a disused warehouse or a converted church. The spirit bloweth where it listeth, in the secondary art of re-creation as in creation proper.

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After thus emphasising at length the indeterminate nature of all plays inherited from the past, Mr Miller goes on to argue, against his more flamboyant colleagues, that the director is *not* free to do exactly as he likes. There is, after all, a linguistic text, which is to be read in the light of historical knowledge. If the text is worthwhile, its ambiguities will be contained within certain parameters that need to be respected. He illustrates the point with parallels drawn from science: Necker's cube which can be perceived as facing either one way or the other, but which remains whole either way, and D'Arcy Thompson's analysis of the evolution of organic forms, which shows a beautiful system of harmonic variations throughout the animal kingdom. These are only similes, of course. A play is not an optical illusion, nor an objectively evolved organism, but a more mixed creation. Nevertheless, there has to be coherence in its flexiblity. If you see Claudius as being activated more by genuine love of Gertrude than by ambition, then all the relevant emphases in *Hamlet* must be altered accordingly. You can take Henry V as a peerless hero of patriotism, as Olivier did in the wartime film, or as an example of gratuitous youthful aggression, dressed out in self-deceiving rhetoric, or you can attempt to combine the two readings in a significant balance. Mr Miller, quoting his own productions, shows how he tried to solve various problems such as these, and how, by constant appeals to social history and art history, he arranged the settings in time and place to fit in with the overall conception decided upon.

He makes the interesting comment that to go through a play in this way, fleshing it out in collaboration with the actors, is to rethink it "in the mode of fiction". This means, I suppose, that to do a good *Hamlet*, you have to compose in your mind the novel of which *Hamlet*, the play, would be a kind of transcendent summary, as if Shakespeare had left us only the poetic peaks of expression, between which the imagination has to supply conjunctive tissue. Conversely, he argues that it is much more difficult to reduce a good novel to a dramatised version and, with hindsight, dismisses his own television dramatisation of *Alice in Wonderland*, which won plaudits in its day, as being only a "travesty" of the book. By and large, the argument is convincing, but there are odd exceptions. *Swann in Love* was an abominable cheapening of Proust, but the film of *A Room with a View* is not unworthy of E. M. Forster's novel. As for the fashionable modern genre of the musical drawn from the book, such as *Gigi*, or *Les Misérables*, I suppose it makes no claims to be other than an enjoyable, middlebrow travesty.

It is fascinating to be given an inside view of the re-creative process, as Mr Miller applies it mainly to Shakespeare's plays and, secondarily, to Mozart's operas. Not that one can necessarily agree with all his directorial inventions. I felt strongly, for instance, that it was a mistake to move *The Merchant of Venice* out of its period to give Shylock the more "normal", or perhaps less sinister, profile of a 19th-century businessman.

As I understand it, anti-Semitism, in Shakespeare's day, was still based on two powerful prejudices: the "unclean" nature of usury, and abhorrence of the Jews as the killers of Christ. I don't know how you make this clear to a modern audience, largely unacquainted with these old superstitions; but the time-shift certainly lowers the tension in the play since by the 19th century all business was based on the taking of interest, and the second prejudice only survived among certain illiterate Catholics.

I was also startled when, in a Jonathan Miller production of *The Marriage of Figaro*, the Countess came in with a baby on her arm. I would say that she has to be childless, as in the text, in order to have an amorously maternal relationship with Cherubino. (This was obviously in Beaumarchais's mind, because, in the bad, unrevivable sequel, *La Mère Coupable*, it turns out that she has had a child by the page.) But these are only quibbles. Mr Miller would be doing students of the drama a great service if he supplemented this preliminary text with an exhaustive *lecture expliquée* of all the Shakespearean plays and other works he has analysed and re-interpreted so thoroughly.

The final impression left on me by his book, in spite of the zest with which it is written, is of the poignant elusiveness of all art. *Exegi monumentum aere perennius . . . the precious life-blood of a master-spirit . . . le buste survit à la cité*—there is no lack of proud statements asserting the permanence of art, and we grow up with the feeling of being surrounded by reassuring monuments, of which Shakespeare, perhaps, is the most miraculous. Yet Mr Miller's main thesis is that almost all art—drama, sculpture

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and painting, but music perhaps less so—only "survives" by becoming other than it originally was. We cannot look at the Belvedere torso, or the Venus de Milo, or the Winged Victory with the eyes of their makers or of the people who first saw them whole in their social context. Each new crystallisation of taste sets Old Masters in a new light, as is proved by the fact that fakes, which may deceive contemporaries of the forger, are often automatically shown up by the passage of time. Even old films which, in one sense, can be said to be an "exact" record of what was before the camera, always strike us by their quaintness, which means that we are not seeing them as did their contemporaries for whom they were not quaint. By a wealth of arguments such as these, Mr Miller arrives at a position of extreme scepticism:

> "There comes a point in the life of any cultural artefact, whether a play or a painting, when the continued existence of the physical token that represents it does not necessarily mean that the original identity of the work survives."

Is this not a daunting thought? We know that most works of art, even those successful in their day, die an early death. Have we now to admit that the relatively small minority of "masterpieces" which live on, only do so in this peculiar way: not by continuing to exist as themselves, but only by feeding, vampire-like, on the fresh substance of subsequent generations in order to be galvanised into a series of pseudo-reincarnations?

If so, then art, whose chief function—according to all the best authorities—is to provide relief from the unbearable formlessness of the universal flux, is itself part and parcel of that flux. It may provide a momentary sensation of coincidence with Being, but this is a recurrent illusion, since Being, undergoing perpetual change, is, as it were, putting new wine into the ghosts of old bottles. And so Mr Miller leaves us in a state of Heraclitean dizziness which, following his good example, we must try to find exhilarating.

That's Entertainment

The Fall & Rise of the Well-Made Film—By JEFFREY RICHARDS

I WAS ASKED recently to choose my ten best films of all time. This is an endeavour that I recommend as a periodic exercise for its value in clarifying the critical faculties. What do I look for in a film? Essentially something that will stimulate the imagination, arouse the emotions, engage the intellect. For a film to be perfect, it requires that all the constituent elements (acting, direction, writing, music, photography, design) should blend together and that the end-product should leave the viewer enthralled, absorbed, inspired.

My list was arrived at quite quickly. It consists of films that I could—and indeed do—happily watch over and over again, deriving something more from them every time. They are, in chronological order: *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1937), *The Sea Hawk* (1940), *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940), *Les Enfants du Paradis* (1945), *Brief Encounter* (1946), *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), *Black Narcissus* (1947), *The Sun Shines Bright* (1953), and *Touch of Evil* (1958). These films span a period of just over twenty years and six of them are Hollywood films—seven if you include Alexander Korda's *The Thief of Bagdad*, begun in Britain but completed in America. This reflects the world-wide dominance of the American film industry, which led a League of Nations Committee to remark: "Only the Bible and the Koran have an indisputably larger circulation than that of the latest film from Los Angeles." All the films are products of a studio system, the dominant mode of production in the heyday of cinema. All but two of the films are in black and white. They are uniformly films of style and wit, of visual power and intellectual integrity, of compassionate humanity and breadth of vision. They are without exception superbly acted, directed, written, designed and produced. There is not a single superfluous frame in any of them. Some are comic, some are tragic, all are life-enhancing. The most recent of them is a quarter of a century old.

Hollywood can still produce films to fulfil the criteria that I have outlined. *E.T.*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, and *My Favourite Year* are recent examples. But the proportion of memorable films to instantly disposable junk is depressingly small by comparison with the heyday of Hollywood cinema. Our cinema screens seem to be engulfed in a tidal wave of what can best be described by that expressive word *schlock*, a product epitomised by the apparently unending series of films about antisocial teenage louts, neanderthal gun-toting thugs and psychopathic mass-murderers—*Porky's 3, Police Academy 5, Rocky 10, Death Wish 27, Friday the Thirteenth Part 69*. These are films that are bereft of ideas, imagination, wit or humanity. They are negative, uncivilised, diminishing, and in the last resort anti-human.

The origins of this development can be traced to the collapse of the studio system in the 1960s, in the wake of the final triumph of television. The dream factory conveyor-belt with a large annual production schedule, which regularly turned out quality films, among them an enviably high proportion of masterpieces, was replaced by a situation in which every film had to be individually packaged, promoted, and financed. Henceforth lawyers, agents, financiers took precedence over creative artists in the generation and execution

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of film projects. Even more seriously the victory of television meant that the composition of the audience for cinema films changed decisively and irreversibly. Teenagers were now seen to be the mainstay of the regular cinema-going audience. The remainder of the population tended to go to the cinema only once or twice a year for the annual blockbuster. Cinematic success was deemed to be obtained by aiming a film directly at a target audience of undiscriminating, mentally dim thirteen-year-olds. This in turn meant the need to promote action over thought and inevitably led to the necessity for greater and ever more graphic violence to stimulate the increasingly jaded teeny-palates. Along with the increase in action went a concomitant decline in ideas and conversation, elegance and wit. Hardly anyone writes intelligent and witty dialogue any more, and film conversations are frequently conducted in barely comprehensible, profanity-strewn monosyllables. It may be realistic, but it isn't good entertainment and it isn't good art.

There have been other reprehensible developments too. The number of film stars has fallen drastically. For instance, in place of the great American film actors like Henry Fonda, Gary Cooper, James Stewart, Spencer Tracy and Humphrey Bogart—performers of grace, sincerity, suppleness and true cinematic presence—have emerged bland, inexpressive dummies like Charles Bronson, Robert Redford, Richard Gere, Burt Reynolds, and Sylvester Stallone, whose acting resembles that of the old cigar-store Indians. The abolition of the "B" feature has meant that many films are now a compulsory half-hour too long in order to make up an acceptable programme length. Colour is deemed essential and no film is made in black and white.

I have a lot of sympathy with John Ford's dictum: "You can get a guy off the street and he can shoot a picture in colour. But it takes a real artist to do a black and white picture." The tyranny of colour is perfectly exemplified by the truly monstrous plan to "colorize" the great black and white films of the past, an action somewhat akin to touching up the Sistine Chapel ceiling with a paint-spray full of new improved super-gloss. The style and pace of films have suffered from the malign influence of the flashy, vapid, pop video, which abhors stillness and reflection, and sanctifies that non-stop, high-decibel noise which through the medium of the Sony Walkman is destroying the hearing of an entire generation.

WHAT IS WRONG with Hollywood today emerges with savage clarity from John Boorman's *Money into Light*.[1] Boorman, the talented director of *Point Blank*, *Deliverance* and *Excalibur*, charts in diary form the making of his latest film, *The Emerald Forest*. It is not just that he suffers from the daunting mechanics of creating a film in the tropical rain forest of Brazil. Problems there might have been expected. It is the sheer amount of time, energy, heartbreak and frustration expended in conferences, negotiations and wheeler-dealing before the film can even get

[1] *Money into Light: The Emerald Forest, A Diary*. By JOHN BOORMAN. Faber, £4.95.

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started. At one stage, when preparations are well advanced, Boorman's backers (Goldcrest) pull out and he rapidly has to find another company to produce the film.

Hollywood studios are no longer the cradles of dreams, run by buccaneering impresarios of flair and imagination; they are anonymous facilities, in the hands of conglomerates and accountants. Boorman reveals that studio heads seldom last more than three years, and the studios develop dozens of projects with the intention of making only one in ten or one in twenty. The prevailing atmosphere is of frantic desperation, a feverish hunt for the latest fad or gimmick that will turn a profit. Boorman laments how few producers there are like his first—the urbane, intelligent, sensitive and supportive David Deutsch. The description of an encounter with veteran director Sam Fuller is a reminder of the old Hollywood professionals, with celluloid in their blood, men who lived, breathed and dreamed their movies.

A not dissimilar picture emerges from Michael Moorcock's *Letters from Hollywood*.[2] He visits Hollywood to write the script for an adventure film and everything that happens to him there confirms "the impression that I'm in a black farce more ludicrous than anything I've ever read about in *The Day of the Locust* or *The Loved One* . . . more terrifying than *The Last Tycoon*." He responds with almost tangible gusto to the exuberant gallimaufry of styles and shapes that make up Los Angeles. To anyone who has never been there, he makes it sound not inappropriately like a pick'n'mix movie set in which all the backlots of the old studios have been unceremoniously dumped down together. Every journey he takes reminds him of films he has seen: the beachside restaurants resemble Polynesian villages in *Outcast of the Islands*, Tijuana bars recall *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, the first view of Catalina Island reminds him of the first glimpse of Skull Island in *King Kong*, and so on. He has the born novelist's eye for enlivening detail, and an infallible ability to convey atmosphere.

He is keen to work but is kept hanging about doing nothing, then caught up in constant conferences and endless rewrites as his director, anxious to be an *auteur*, continually changes his mind. Moorcock feels his sanity becoming threatened and concludes despairingly:

> "My boss has the imagination of a tub of coleslaw. He has the creative gift of a cockroach. He has the emotional age of a nine-year-old schoolboy, and he has the power to summon up millions upon millions of dollars, to command the destinies of hundreds of human beings, to employ the creative gifts of hundreds more—and debase them! . . . What is alarming—*he is only one of many similar monsters*. For every Ford, Hitchcock or Hawks, there are fifty of those others. And the people with the money and the power to hire them seem completely unable to distinguish between them."

Moorcock's picture *Return to Camelot* is never made, and what Hollywood has lost is borne in on him when one night he catches Michael Curtiz's *Captain Blood* on television. As he luxuriates in the good-looking, well-acted, well-written, perfectly paced, 50-year-old movie, he reflects: "All these bastards should be made to watch ten or twenty Curtiz movies before they begin any new projects." My sentiments exactly, sir.

THE BLEND OF TALENTS needed to create my ten best films was often achieved in Hollywood's heyday by the great producers (David O. Selznick, Darryl F. Zanuck, Hal B. Wallis, etc.). Samuel Goldwyn was one of this talented élite. A self-made Jewish immigrant, he combined *chutzpah*, respect for quality, and showmanship—the essentials for both commercial and artistic success. He became legendary for his creative use of the English language, which resulted in the much-quoted Goldwynisms: "A verbal contract is not worth the paper it's written on"; "I can tell you in two words—im-possible"; "We've all passed a lot of water since those days"; "Include me out". . . . But this was the man who produced films based on books by Zola, Tolstoy, and Emily Brontë, and who unsuccessfully sought the services as scriptwriters of Sigmund Freud and Bernard Shaw. (Shaw memorably told him: "The trouble, Mr Goldwyn, is that you are only interested in art and I am only interested in money.") His respect for writers did not mitigate Goldwyn's showmanship. He told one scriptwriter: "I want you to begin with an earthquake and work up to a climax", and he allegedly told Eisenstein after seeing *Battleship Potemkin* that he wanted him to do something similar, only cheaper, as a vehicle for Ronald Colman. However, his commitment to quality is evidenced by the fact that he several times sacked directors, scrapped films, and started again from scratch because they were not up to the standard of quality he wanted.

Michael Freedland's biography *The Goldwyn Touch*[3] is a breezy, chatty, account written in short, newspaper-style paragraphs, with no footnotes, no bibliography and no attributions. He has little to say about the films, totally ignoring some of Goldwyn's finest (*The Real Glory, The Hurricane, Barbary Coast*). Freedland in fact presents us with a *Dallas* view of Hollywood—rags to riches, loves and lawsuits, feuds and follies, deals and debts, all packaged as a sort of soap-opera novelette. Faced with this book, I suspect that Goldwyn himself would have ordered it scrapped and started again.

There could be no greater contrast than between Sam Goldwyn, the self-taught malaprop from the Warsaw Ghetto, and John Houseman, the cultured cosmopolitan, born in Bucharest, raised in Paris and educated at an English public school. But Houseman shared with Goldwyn a very Jewish *chutzpah*, a concern for quality and an enviable energy which has kept him going full-tilt into his eighties. In *Unfinished Business*,[4] essentially a condensation of his three previous volumes of autobiography, Houseman displays all the intelligence, style, and razor-sharp observation that he brought to his memorable Hollywood film productions (*Letter from an Unknown Woman, Julius Caesar, The Bad and the Beautiful,*

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[2] *Letters from Hollywood*. By MICHAEL MOORCOCK. Harrap, £10.95.

[3] *The Goldwyn Touch*. By MICHAEL FREEDLAND. Harrap, £9.95.

[4] *Unfinished Business: A Memoir*. By JOHN HOUSEMAN. Chatto & Windus, £14.95.

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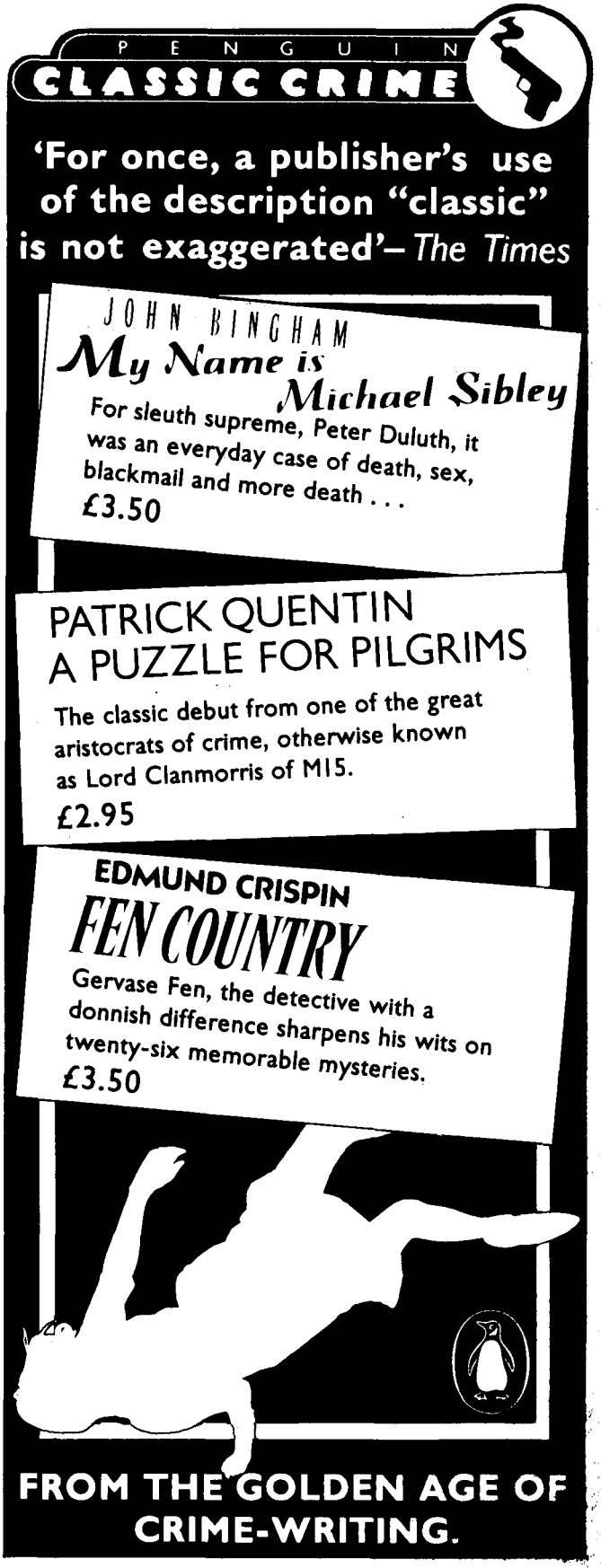
Lust for Life) of the late 1940s and the 1950s. His movie success was achieved by his own account with a potent mixture of determination, diplomacy and deviousness, and he needed all of these qualities in his dealings with the legendary figures he encountered in his distinguished stage and film career (Orson Welles, Charles Laughton, Katharine Hepburn, Raymond Chandler, for instance). For his years of movie production were matched, and probably even exceeded, by a stage career which took him on an eventual course through the Federal Theater Project, the Mercury Theater, the American Shakespeare Festival and the Juilliard School. He embarked on a third career when at the age of 71 he won an Oscar for his performance as an imperious law professor in *The Paper Chase*, variations of which he has been playing happily ever since.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the book is Houseman's account of his association with the extravagant, erratic genius of the daemon-driven Orson Welles—on the stage (the voodoo *Macbeth*, the modern-dress *Julius Caesar*, the controversial labour musical *The Cradle Will Rock*); on the radio (The Mercury Theater of the Air, including the celebrated *War of the Worlds* broadcast, which terrified America); and in the cinema (*Citizen Kane*). Houseman vividly conveys the sense of dazzling excitement, feverish imagination, bold experiment, sheer adrenalin, that flowed through those years.

WELLES, DESPITE HIS FORMIDABLE TALENTS and in part because of his own character and inner contradictions, was never able to pursue the kind of film career achieved by two of the other great names in the Hollywood pantheon—Alfred Hitchcock and John Ford. They worked continuously and securely within the Hollywood studio system, turning out masterpiece after masterpiece. Their careers are charted in Tag Gallagher's massive, authoritative, and endlessly illuminating study of Ford, *John Ford: The Man and his Films*,[5] and in François Truffaut's classic book-length interview with Hitchcock, first published in 1967 and now revised and extended to include Hitch's last years.[6] For all the constraints of box office, censorship, and front-office interference, from which both from time to time suffered, each was able to sustain his own artistic vision and to pursue his creative odyssey through half a century of movie-making.

The late 1950s and early '60s saw both men achieving some of their finest work: Hitchcock making *Rear Window, Vertigo, North by Northwest,* and *Psycho*; and Ford making *The Searchers, The Last Hurrah, The Horse Soldiers*, and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. Then came the crisis in the industry, the studios' chronic loss of confidence, the shrinkage of the audience, and the demise of the old impresarios. We should not sentimentalise the moguls of the Golden Age. Some of them were ruthless, foul-mouthed,

[5] *John Ford: The Man and his Films*. By TAG GALLAGHER. University of California Press, $35.00, £29.75.
[6] *Hitchcock*. By FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT. Secker & Warburg, £18.00.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womanising vulgarians. (When Harry Cohn died, for instance, the record turn-out at his funeral was said to be due to people wanting to make sure he was really dead.) But they all knew how to create stars, how to make films, and how to motivate the creative talents with which Hollywood in those days abounded.

The great directors of that Golden Age found it increasingly difficult to get their projects off the ground, and the final sections of the books on Ford and Hitchcock make depressing reading. Hitchcock was forced into projects in which he had no confidence, compelled to make compromises which fatally flawed his last films, and was seriously limited in his choice of subjects. As he wrote sadly in 1970 to Truffaut:

> "We have to avoid elderly persons and limit ourselves to youthful characters; a film must contain some anti-establishment elements; no picture can cost more than 2 or 3 million dollars."

Ford's situation was even bleaker. He complained in 1962:

> "I've had three good stories okayed by the studios—warm, human stories. It's not the studio that turned them down, but the Madison Avenue and Wall St. people who do the financing. They sent them back saying there was not enough sex and violence."

Ford had a film (*The Miracle of Merriford*) cancelled at a few days' notice and spent ten years trying and failing to set up a long-cherished film version of Conan Doyle's *The White Company*. Most serious for Ford was the fact that the values which he stood for and which informed his films (family, community, tradition, duty, service, nation) had become unfashionable, with the result that a great artist was condemned to the bitterness and frustration of inactivity.

THERE WERE SPECTACULAR and notable victims of the studio years. Welles and Stroheim, for instance, were forced to deploy their formidable talents acting in the films of others rather than in creating their own films. Other talented mavericks managed to survive. Edgar G. Ulmer regularly produced sheer cinematic poetry on minuscule budgets in the tiny studios of Hollywood's Poverty Row. John Cassavetes, against all the odds, working outside the system and financing his directorial career by a busy acting schedule, has produced ten intensely personal *avant-garde* films, which according to Raymond Carney in his admiring but meticulous analysis of Cassavetes's work are "like nothing else" in cinema.[7]

The mark of any great director is his personal style. Many of today's made-for-TV movies look and sound so exactly alike that one could be forgiven for thinking that they had been directed by computers. Perhaps they were, but there is no mistaking the distinctive voice and style of Franco Zeffirelli. Although he has directed a clutch of stylish films (*Taming of the Shrew, Romeo and Juliet, The Champ*), he is

[7] *American Dreaming: The Films of John Cassavetes and the American Experience*. By RAYMOND CARNEY. University of California Press, $27.50, £23.25.

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perhaps best known as a director of stage and screen opera. His personality, his sensibility and his vision are perfectly fitted for the form, since, as is clear from his zestful autobiography,[8] his life has been like a grand opera, with a dramatic and turbulent childhood, wartime adventures with the partisans, and then absorption into a theatrical world peopled by sacred monsters, all of them vividly evoked (Luchino Visconti, Coco Chanel, Maria Callas, Elizabeth Taylor, Anna Magnani, etc.). Everything in the book is several times larger than life, as Zeffirelli makes his distinctive way through a Technicolor world of rages and tantrums, love affairs and heartbreaks, triumphs and disasters. Like Ford, Hitchcock, Boorman and Moorcock, Zeffirelli too has suffered from the paranoia of present-day Hollywood, seeing his film *Endless Night* cut to pieces by producers panicked by the negative reaction from an unruly young preview audience.

THE HISTORY OF the film companies which were linked to the great studios is one of the most under-researched areas of cinema history, partly because of the non-availability of jealously guarded company records and partly because of the low priority accorded to production context by the successive critical orthodoxies (auteurism, structuralism, psychoanalysis) which have dominated the Film Studies world. No approach to individual film analysis or to directorial careers is complete without this production context. The economic and industrial imperatives need to be understood, and this is something scholars are currently coming to terms with. Paul Kerr has assembled a useful anthology of writings on the subject in *The Hollywood Film Industry*.[9] Much of his collection is immediately accessible to the reader, which is a great relief, since so many of the previous volumes in this series have been virtually unreadable—the worst kind of sterile academic writing, afflicted with terminal jargonitis. One constantly received the impression that the authors of these volumes were writing for so few people that they would have been better advised to send each other long letters rather than bother publishers with their effusions. As Umberto Eco rightly observed, "Accessibility is a moral duty for academics." (Eco promptly demonstrated the truth of this axiom by writing the brilliant, multi-layered, best-selling novel which has just been turned into a film starring Sean Connery.)

Accessibility has never been a problem for Roy Armes, whose work has always been well-informed, lucid, and keenly readable. Having turned out the best single-volume history of British cinema, he has now done the same for French cinema, with a book which, distilled from years of work in the field, impressively blends information, interpretation and reflection.[10] Luis Buñuel, one of the artistic giants to feature in

[8] *Zeffirelli*. By FRANCO ZEFFIRELLI. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

[9] *The Hollywood Film Industry*. Edited by PAUL KERR. Routledge (BFI Readers in Film Studies), £7.95.

[10] *French Cinema*. By ROY ARMES. Secker & Warburg, £12.95, paper £6.95.

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Armes's account, is also the subject of a careful, thorough, film-by-film analysis by Gwynne Edwards, beguilingly entitled *The Discreet Art of Luis Buñuel*.[11]

FOR ALL THE INDIVIDUAL, brilliant, hard-won achievements of heroic individuals like Buñuel and Welles, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the most wide-ranging, sustained, and consistently high-quality body of work came out of the old studio system. Have the virtues and values of that system gone forever? I think not. If I were to be asked to choose my ten best ever television programmes, they would, using the same criteria, be drawn from the likes of *Brideshead Revisited, Boys from the Black Stuff, Jewel in the Crown, The Monocled Mutineer, Orwell on Jura, Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy, The Naked Civil Servant, Bleak House, Barchester Chronicles, One Summer, Poppyland, Lent, The Box of Delights, Churchill—The Wilderness Years, Auf Wiedersehen Pet*, the Granada *Sherlock Holmes*, etc.

What is most marked is that where my choice of films was predominantly American, my choice of television would be exclusively British. American television used to boast high standards of production, acting, and intelligent scripting in the days of *The Naked City, The Defenders, Star Trek, The Rogues, Kojak* and *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*. But latterly American television, like American cinema, has become a wasteland of *dreck*—bland, pre-packaged junk that functions as a kind of flickering wallpaper. It seems to be dictated by lowest-common-denominator thinking, ratings terror, and the slavish provision of bowdlerised imitations of big-screen successes.

The link with cinema is instructive. For the rightly praised British Film Renaissance, which has produced such excellent work as *Gregory's Girl, A Room With a View, My Beautiful Laundrette, Letter to Brezhnev, No Surrender, Another Country*, and *Dance with a Stranger*, has been fuelled by television money and serviced by talents schooled in the great studio systems of BBC and ITV. It seems clear that the studio system is alive and well and living in British television, where the tradition of quality, impresarios with flair and a commitment to entertain and instruct, to uplift and expand, is ensuring that just as Hollywood films are getting worse and worse, British television is getting better and better. It is something which should give pause for thought to a Conservative government as, in the year of the BBC's 50th anniversary, it intensifies its campaign against one of the finest television companies in the world.

[11] *The Discreet Art of Luis Buñuel*. By GWYNNE EDWARDS. Marion Boyars, £6.95.

Look Back in Languor

Theatre Books—By MICHAEL BILLINGTON

"Gossip is the acceptable face of intellect", observes a character in Alan Bennett's *Kafka's Dick*,[1] condemning the English obsession with biographical trivia: the fact that E. M. Forster found solace with an Egyptian tramdriver, or that W. H. Auden never wore underpants. But while I broadly accept Bennett's thesis—that we have substituted a fascination with artists' lives for active engagement with their work—he overlooks the perennial appeal of gossip, and the illumination it sometimes provides.

The most intriguing of recent theatre books is undeniably *The Orton Diaries* edited by John Lahr: a work that is a mixture of gossip, self-revelation, character-assassination and artistic observation.[2] You read it with a guilty pleasure at finding Orton pinpricking the balloon of so many theatrical reputations. At the same time the portrait that emerges of a cold-hearted stylist, a picker-up of unconsidered conversational trifles, an alienated outsider who views bourgeois normality with vehement disdain, explains Orton the dramatist. He is often compared with Oscar Wilde, and it is true that there are stylistic similarities. The crucial difference is that whereas Wilde's plays are coded messages about the double life led by a Victorian homosexual and work within conventional theatrical forms, Orton's plays are the work of a voluntary outlaw who openly despises all forms of authority.

What the *Diaries*—covering the last seven months of Orton's life—reveal is his detachment from common feeling: the source of much comedy. His return to Leicester for his mother's funeral becomes an occasion of Ortonesque farce, with the mortician remarking of the corpse, "We try to give a lifelike impression", and with Orton rummaging through old belongings and inadvertently discarding his father's false teeth. Drunken Christmas revellers leave Orton wanly concluding, "They've nothing to celebrate." Even a March walk through Regent's Park has Orton observing, "Sunshine and the first ghastliness of Spring." Orton views life as a permanent outsider so that a weekend visit he and his lover, Kenneth Halliwell, pay to the Lewensteins at Brighton

[1] *Kafka's Dick*. By ALAN BENNETT. Faber and Faber, to be published in the spring.

[2] *The Orton Diaries*. Edited by JOHN LAHR. METHUEN, £12.50.

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becomes like a Martian visitor's observation of English family life. Orton always seems apart from society rather than a part of it. His very limitations as a human being also make him a good dramatist—seeking "vindictive triumph", as John Lahr has it, through laughter.

I find Orton's accounts of homosexual saturnalia in Holloway Road toilets and of the pederastic delights of a Tangier holiday repetitive and disgusting (why not admit, occasionally, to moral revulsion?). But Orton's more frenetic bouts of promiscuity often coincide with some crisis in his life—a funeral, a first night, the further deterioration of his relationship with Halliwell—and are offset by sharp flicks of wit and a beady eye for pretence. When Kenneth Williams turns up wearing bank-clerk clothes, Orton deftly observes: "He took off his mac and revealed a nondescript suit and tie that wasn't exactly quiet, more mumbling." And, taking himself off to the cinema, Orton shrewdly questions Olivier's appearance as Othello: "Olivier entered on Cyprus dressed in the full gear of Islam looking like a Turk. Yet it's quite clear that he's a Christian and a general of a Christian power."

Orton's *Diaries* are a mixture of cruelty, caustic wit, sound sense, artistic envy, sexual display, and self-destructiveness. Their value is that they include what other diarists often leave out, and that they give vent both to Orton's obsession with style and to what Charles Marowitz calls his "convict mentality". It is a combination of these two—a literary perfectionism and a rage against authority—that gives the plays their peculiar flavour. As Orton says, "Comedy is a valid criticism of society, farce a valid comment on life"; and reading these noxiously fascinating journals you begin to understand how an implacable hostility to bourgeois order and convention was at the heart of this Firbankian anarch.

ORTON'S *Loot* inevitably features (though *What the Butler Saw* is the better play) in a bulky two-volume publication: *Landmarks of British Drama: The Plays of the Sixties* and *The Plays of the Seventies*.[3] Reading the Introductions by two American academics, Roger Cornish and Violet Ketels, and the plays themselves, one is filled with an overpowering sense of nostalgia. Was there really a time when our theatre exuded such bright-morning confidence, when good plays readily poured fourth, when artistic visions were so clear? It all seems far off and long ago. Writing about the Royal Shakespeare Company, the editors remark on Peter Hall's preference for simplicity and "a style in which visual effects would remain secondary to the speaking actor." How different from the gaudy, neo-Victorian design which these days often prevails at Stratford and the Barbican. And while John Bury in the '60s could expressly say, "One can take a bit of stone in one's hand and say this is *Hamlet*", if he uttered such sentiments today at a production meeting he would probably have the stone cast back at him.

The plays in these volumes are well chosen, the texts clearly presented. But the editors view British drama through rose-tinted American spectacles and ignore many of the gritty realities. Of course, *Look Back In Anger* was a landmark play, and of course it released a lot of energy in other dramatists. A dispassionate examination of it today underlines just how formally conservative it was (with its good old-fashioned "curtains" to every act), and how much its quality lay in its painful, Strindbergian portrait of a modern marriage rather than in its incendiary politics. Again, the editors tell us that Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop moved to Stratford East in 1953 and that its maverick interpretations of the classics began to attract London critics. In fact, it was only after the company had triumphed at the Paris Théâtre de Nations in 1955 with *Arden of Faversham* and *Volpone* (an invitation that outraged the British theatrical establishment, according to Howard Goorney) that they got the attention they deserved.

It is the heady, hyperbolic optimism of the editors that makes me demur. They tell us that after the advent of Jimmy Porter, the renaissance of British theatre was on, and "That renaissance is still alive and healthy." Frankly, it is not. Compared to American theatre, we may look well-endowed, but our two national companies are being forced into ever more commercial choices; our regional theatres exist from hand to mouth; and living writers know that large-cast plays on public themes stand little chance of production. Our theatre is in decline through under-funding; and, although good plays still get written, there is little sense, in British drama of the '80s, of engagement with the issues of our time (*Pravda* is a shining exception). Asked why he writes, Peter Barnes is quoted here as saying: "I want to change the world." Mr Barnes is a good and talented writer, as *The Ruling Class* and *Red Noses* testify, but I hazard that he has done less to change British life (let alone the world) than an average episode of *Eastenders*. British drama has accomplished much in the last 30 years; but it has mildly dented rather than drastically altered the nature of British society. To claim otherwise, as here, is to fall victim to an academic Pollyanna-ism.

WHAT DRAMATISTS generally change is our perception of the world rather than the world itself; and someone who has undoubtedly done that through his eloquent, concrete despair is Samuel Beckett. Poor old Beckett is, in consequence, falling as much a prey to dry exegesis as Alan Bennett's Kafka, who shudders to learn that there are 15,000 volumes about him in the Library of Congress. One volume eminently worth having is *The Beckett Country* by Eoin O'Brien, with photographs by David H. Davison.[4] This is a superlative piece of book-publishing that seeks to place Beckett firmly as an Irish writer by exploring his drama,[5] fiction, and poetry in terms of topography. The results are eye-opening. The juxtaposition of a bent, withered tree on Glencree in the Dublin mountains with a passage from *Waiting For Godot*

[3] *Landmarks of Modern British Drama: The Plays of the Sixties. The Plays of the Seventies.* Edited by ROGER CORNISH and VIOLET KETELS. Methuen, £4.95 each.

[4] *The Beckett Country*. By EOIN O'BRIEN. Photographs by DAVID H. DAVISON. The Black Cat Press, with Faber and Faber, £40.00.

[6] *The Complete Dramatic Works*. By SAMUEL BECKETT. Faber and Faber, £12.50.

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persuades you that this is the source of the play's solitary landscape. The paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland clearly filter through Beckett's work; and when he writes, in *More Pricks Than Kicks*, of a quattrocento gem with "that strange limey hobnailed texture of complexion", it is not hard to believe the image derives from the Uccello Virgin and Child. I never realised until now that when Pozzo complains "I've lost my Kapp and Peterson" he is referring not just to his briar but to a famous pipe-shop on Dublin's O'Connell Street. The pictures are directly related to the text; and they convince you that, even in exile, Beckett has never left behind the sea, the sky, the mountains and the street-sights of his native land.

POSSIBLY THE HARDEST critical book to write at this stage of history is one on Shakespeare. Texts, sources, imagery, stage history have all been so extensively analysed that it is hard to know what there is left to say. But *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*[6] is a wise and valuable book—basically a revision of lectures on individual plays given by Professor Frye to his Toronto students—that should have wide circulation. I recently took part in a weekend critical seminar devoted to the question: "Is Shakespeare still our contemporary?" Professor Frye puts the matter succinctly by saying that if we study only the historical Shakespeare, we shirk the mystery of how someone can communicate with all times and cultures; but if we think of him only as our contemporary we lose the reward of a liberal education, which is to study societies different from ours.

What I admire about Professor Frye is that he combines the general with the particular. In his essay on *Hamlet* he pins down the play's topicality: it deals with the situation that brought the Reformation to England, in that Henry VIII asked the Pope to dissolve his marriage to Catherine of Aragon on the grounds that she had been married to his deceased older brother. But, in a larger sense, Frye sees the play as an ironic tragedy: all the Ghost achieves is the supplanting of Claudius by the son of the man he had killed before the play began. In that it anticipates Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard in exploring the claustrophobia of consciousness.

The tendency in modern Shakespeare production is not merely to bury language under visual display but to appropriate the plays to our own age and assume that *Romeo and Juliet* is really about present-day Verona or *Hamlet* a comment on a contemporary despotism. Modern-dress Shakespeare can often illuminate a play (witness the recent RSC *Merry Wives of Windsor*, set in Harold Macmillan's England), but it can also become a lazy reflex action and a form of artistic vanity: the assumption that Shakespeare is a Marxist-feminist simply because the director is.

Professor Frye underlines the benefits of seeing Shakespeare in historical perspective. He writes, for instance, of the conspirators in *Henry IV*, Part One: "Before long they have produced what for a Tudor audience would be one of the most terrifying symbols, later to appear at the beginning of *King Lear*: a map, with proposals to divide the country into parts." Subconsciously I may have realised the implications of that image, but the idea is crystallised by Professor Frye.

To return to *Kafka's Dick*, that seems to me the true function of literary and dramatic criticism: not to make arbitrary connections, but to illuminate a work through example and to enhance common understanding.

[6] *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*. Yale University Press, $17.95, £12.95.

Tundra's edge

Here is the wolf. The wind, the sound of rain,
the kitchen light that falls across the lawn—
these things are his. This house is his domain.

Here is the wolf. He slips in with the dawn
to raid the mirror. Shadows will persist
for days, to mark the distance he has gone

in search of you. Yet still you will insist
the wolf died out in these parts long ago:
there is no wolf; the wolf does not exist.

You catch no scent. And where the mirror glows
those are not eyes, although they shine so bright.
You never dream of running with the snow.

Yet here is Wolf. He rustles in the night.
Only the wind, but you switch on the light.

John Cameron Burnside

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Books Encountered

Portraits of Poets. By CHRISTOPHER BARKER. Edited by SEBASTIAN BARKER. Carcanet, £9.95.

Glossy paperback album of new photographs of 65 poets, each with a short verse sample, ranging alphabetically from Dannie Abse to David Wright, chronologically from Sir Sacheverell Sitwell to Seamus Heaney, stylistically from David Gascoyne to Philip Larkin. Life-worn faces, mostly.

The Way of the Actor: A New Path to Personal Knowledge and Power. By BRIAN BATES. Century, £10.95.

An expert on shamanism who teaches psychology at Sussex, Dr Bates treats actors, rather solemnly, as links with "the imaginal world, our universal self". Interviews with Charlton Heston, Glenda Jackson, Anthony Sher, and Liv Ullmann spice the informative Jungian quest.

William James. By GRAHAM BIRD. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £15.95.

Scholarly analysis, in Ted Honderich's "The Arguments of the Philosophers" series, of James's pragmatism and its connections with ethics, psychology and voluntarist religion. Professor Bird writes less compellingly than James, but very convincingly; he also shows the links with Wittgenstein and Grice.

Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885-1945. By MARTIN BLUMENSON. Jonathan Cape, £14.95.

Admiring, frank and amazingly terse life of the General Professor Blumenson calls "a throwback to the Teutonic knight, the Saracen, the Crusader". Typically, it gives 13 lines to Eisenhower's forbidding Patton to capture Prague ahead of the Russians, commenting only: "He felt rotten to be denied capture of one of the great capitals of Europe." And the Czechs?

Europe: More than a Continent. By MICHAEL BUTLER. Heinemann, £15.

Dull title for a deadpan but profound and intelligent study of the European Community, by the recently retired British Permanent Representative to it. Its "*engrenage*"—ever closer meshing together—he sees as "one of the most significant and beneficial contributions of the old Continent to the post-war world."

Philosophers and Pamphleteers: Political Theorists of the Enlightenment. By MAURICE CRANSTON. Oxford University Press, £12.95, paper £4.95.

Expanded version of Professor Cranston's 1984 Carlyle Lectures on Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Holbach, and Condorcet, rehabilitating them as disparate advocates of freedom, not enlightened despotism, and admirers of various English traits.

Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages. By UMBERTO ECO. Translated by HUGH BREDIN. Yale University Press, $12.95, £6.95.

Deftly streamlined translation of a chapter on medieval (here mainly visual) aesthetics written for a 1959 handbook, in the wake of Eco's 1956 study of *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d'Aquino*. Essentially, it shows the wholeness of scholastic thought: science, theology, poetry, rhetoric, art, mathematics—harmony at all costs.

After the Second Flood: Essays in Post-War German Literature. By MICHAEL HAMBURGER. Carcanet, £16.95.

Worthy sequel to the author's *A Proliferation of Prophets*, which ranged from Nietzsche to Brecht. This includes the latest (1985) works of Richard Anders, Thomas Bernhard, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Gert Hoffmann, Ernst Jandl, Ursula Krechel, Michael Krüger, Friederike Mayröcker, Helga Novak, Christa Reinig, Botho Strauss, Martin Walser, *et al.*

Cutting the Lion's Tail: Suez Through Egyptian Eyes. By MOHAMED H. HEIKAL. André Deutsch, £12.95.

Salutary Nasserite account of the 1956 débâcle, by the former editor of the Cairo newspaper *Akhbar el-Yom*, with plausible but hard-to-check inside stories, including at least four attempts on Nasser's life, by alleged agents of Britain, France, and Israel. The upshot? The US replaced the UK in the Middle East: a legacy with a curse.

John le Carré. By ERIC HOMBERGER. Methuen, £3.50.

Admirable handbook, more comprehensive than Tony Barley's (noticed here in May 1986), and addressing the key question: are the books "novels" or "entertainments"? It remains cagey on their respective merits, implying no lapse from *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* to *The Little Drummer Girl*.

Ben Jonson: His Life and Work. By ROSALIND MILES. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £19.95.

Crisply written, authoritative biography, stronger on the life than on the works, and hence worth reading alongside Anne Barton's and Richard Dutton's recent studies. In an appendix, Dr Miles tackles the enigma of Jonson's birth date. General readers might have welcomed illustrations and less minute print.

Thorold Dickinson: The Man and his Films. By JEFFREY RICHARDS. Croom Helm, £22.50.

Outrageous price for photo-reproduced typescript; but a good, scholarly study of a potentially great director who barely fulfilled his promise but became a dedicated teacher, much against the mix of kitsch and Marxism. Of Richards's four preferred films, *Gaslight* and *Queen of Spades* seem to me the best; but on the admitted failure, *Secret People*, he's most revealing.

Descent to Suez: Diaries 1951-56. By EVELYN SHUCKBURGH. Selected for publication by JOHN CHARMLEY. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

The title, seemingly catchpenny, is apt. Sir Evelyn was Eden's Private Secretary from 1951 to 1954, and headed the FO's Middle Eastern desk from 1954 to 1956. Dr Charmley's selection, clipped, civilised, but poorly indexed, shows catastrophe ahead.

The Ethnic Origins of Nations. By ANTHONY D. SMITH. Basil Blackwell, £25.

Dedicated to the memory of Hugh Seton-Watson, and with epigraphs from Yeats, Durkheim, and the prophet Amos, this is a cool, wide-ranging essay in historical sociology, recalling the deepest roots of nationalism, no modern invention but a datum to be understood if we hope to transcend it.

International English Usage. By LORETO TODD and IAN HANCOCK. Croom Helm, £16.95.

Pioneering attempt by, respectively, an English and an American academic to do a global Fowler, less prescriptively than he, but more so than many flaccid practitioners of linguistic natural history. Totally absorbing. *Lacunae* include the choice of "that" or "which".

Philip Larkin and English Poetry. By TERRY WHALEN. Macmillan, £25.

Sadly, a rather plodding book, though it makes fruitful comparisons with Betjeman, Eliot, Thom Gunn, Lawrence, R. S. Thomas, and Ted Hughes. But prose exegesis is bound to seem dull against Larkin's clear, subtle, and explorable verse.

The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume I: 1904-1912. Edited by ANDREW MCNEILLIE. Hogarth Press, £18 until 1 January 1987, £20 thereafter.

So buy it for Christmas. There are several new plums.

R.M.

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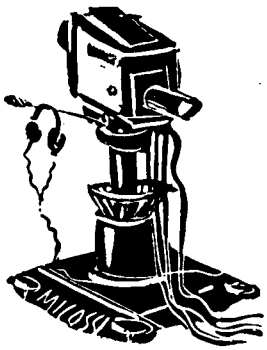
CINEMA

Cultural Games in a Cold Climate

Polish Films since "Solidarity"—By EDWARD ROGERSON



FOR INTELLECTUALLY-MINDED film-goers in the mid-1970s, interest in the Polish cinema developed into something of a liberal love affair. A series of gifted directors—Polanski, Skolimowski, Wajda, Zanussi—seemed capable of fulfilling the premature promise of the "Polish Film School" of the late 1950s. It was as though the cinema reflected a fundamental shift in Polish attitudes, a concerted attempt on the part of both government and people to reconcile the ruling ideology with Poland's cultural and historical traditions. (What these traditions were, and are, remains undiscovered to Western liberal sensitivities.) Here, it was argued, were Skolimowski and Polanski, resident in the West, but bringing to their work an added Polish dimension. Here, more remarkably, was Wajda, struggling at the limits of official censorship to elucidate the evolution of the Polish political debate, from its troubled totalitarian origins in the late 1940s to a tentative plurality in the 1970s.

The love affair was, perhaps, doomed. The intellectual climate worsened (with the economy) in mid-decade, and the Polish authorities began to place serious restrictions on the freedom of manoeuvre for independent-minded creative artists. If intellectual pluralism had ever really existed outside the wishful thinking of Western observers, it had by 1977 been frustrated with the reimposition of ideological orthodoxy. Worse still for the Western liberal, the election of a Polish Pope in 1978 and his triumphal pilgrimage to his native land in 1979 revealed an apparently less creditable side to Polish cultural expression: a powerful undercurrent of priest-ridden, messianic Catholicism. Then *Solidarity*, the highly equivocal miracle: a relaxation of censorship, Wajda's *Man of Iron* (*Czlowiek z żelaza*, 1981), and the sight of a Communist régime on the run. Then Martial Law: the reimposition of totalitarian repression and the gradual elimination of independent expression. Strict censorship weighed down on the cinema, as on all cultural activities, and with a government funding-preference for blandly commercial comedies and adventures, the more independently-minded film directors were forced to the margins of cultural life, to rediscover Poland's dangerously seductive cultural traditions of allusion and allegory.

Seductive, because such obliqueness offers a way round the problems created with the imposition of strict censorship on Polish artistic expression over much of the past two centuries. As Poland's existence—even as a cultural entity—has often been fragile and uncertain, the allusive approach has given the creative artist, in a society where the artist is expected to be politically engaged, a means of making his views known in a safe manner. But dangerous also, because the ease of withdrawal into oblique expression, into allusion and allegory, has served to reinforce a peculiarly Polish sense of self-regard, of cultural superiority in the face of foreign domination. This has created an intellectual climate where it is considered normal to identify meaning in the most unpromising material, meaning often reinforced in the dramatic arts through presentation which tends to be highly mannered and stylised. This is more of a problem for the theatre, but the cinema is not immune. Its leading performers—actors and directors—show a fondness for the grandiloquent gesture which makes it impossible to ignore the overwhelming presence of *meaning*, even where the delivered speech seems apparently innocuous.

IT IS DIFFICULT for Polish film directors—and for all Polish creative artists—to escape such cultural particularism, especially since most Poles feel a strong sense of isolation from what they see as their common European heritage. The latest generation of film directors, lacking the prestige which allows a Wajda or a Zanussi to undertake international co-productions, is seemingly forced to fall back on Poland's specific cultural traditions: the seductive pull of Polish Romanticism, in particular. The undeniable literary stature of the leading figures of Polish Romanticism, most notably Adam Mickiewicz,[1] is overshadowed for contemporary Poles by the political dimension of the role of Romanticism in the long-standing struggle to preserve Polish cultural autonomy against the partitioning autocracies. If the tradition of armed insurrection now holds little attraction for a generation growing up in the shadow of the experiences of the Second World War, the emotional value of Romantic cultural particular-

[1] Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855). Polish Romantic poet and political activist, after 1829 resident mainly in France. Actively engaged in the raising of a Polish Legion to fight the Russians in the Crimean War. Died of cholera at Constantinople, 26 November 1855.

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ism is still strong for this independent-minded nation.

Wojciech Marczewski, seeking in his film *Dreszcze* (*The Creeps*)[2] to recount Poland's experience in the 1950s, shows the continuing relevance of these traditions to a Polish audience. In a highly nostalgic and lyrical style (something of a stylistic tribute to Andrei Tarkovsky[3]), he charts the gradual indoctrination, at an isolated scout camp in a crumbling mansion, of a sensitive and introspective adolescent into the crude Marxism of Stalinist Poland. Isolated from his domestic background, where his family attempts to remain loyal to Poland's besieged traditions (his father, indeed, has been imprisoned), he is taught to spy on his friends as potential imperialist agents, and to participate in mindless ceremonies of praise for the new ruling ideology. At first loyal to his background, to the Polish classics (and how a Polish audience must relish the extensive quotations from Adam Mickiewicz's anti-Czarist drama, *Dziady*[4]), he finally succumbs to the insidious emotional pressure of this exotic mixture of scouting and Marxism. As the claustrophobic world of the camp begins to fall apart under the influence of outside events (for this is 1956, the first sign that Poland's Communist élite has lost its nerve), this incipient Polish Romantic becomes the last, most surprising convert to the decaying orthodoxy.

Marczewski makes some telling comments through historical analogy on the collapse of ideological certainty. These are, however, somewhat overshadowed by his relentless determination to place his work firmly within the context of the Polish Romantic tradition. Even his acknowledged admiration for Tarkovsky betrays him, since it creates a confusion which he never really resolves. Tarkovsky, the great lyric poet of the Russian cinema, has always refused to compromise his poetic vision before the demands, either of official ideology, or of dissidence (as a Romantic, Keats rather than Byron, perhaps).

Marczewski, though, is a victim—albeit willing—of his own cultural tradition, a tradition which encourages the creative artist to become politically engaged. It is to Byron, the Byron of Missolonghi and of *Childe Harold* (Mickiewicz was, in fact, the Polish translator) that Mickiewicz and his contemporaries looked for poetic inspiration in the 19th century; and it is to Mickiewicz, the archetypical Polish Romantic poet and political exile, that the Poles of today look as an exemplar of the conjuncture of Romantic lyricism and political commitment. It is, therefore, hardly surprising to hear at various parts in *Dreszcze* deeply significant quotations from Mickiewicz's most important works, and it is difficult to ignore the audible murmurs of satisfaction from a Polish audience when these quotations are recognised. Sadly, a film which so satisfies a Polish audience with its literary and political allusions will be unable to avoid falling victim to its own significance, so that the Western film-goer, aware that some game is being played but largely unaware of the cultural rules of that game, comes away dissatisfied.

THE POLISH CREATIVE ARTIST is essentially trying to satisfy two intractable—even mutually exclusive—demands: a cultural tradition which sees in the artist a guarantor of national identity; and a political climate which has been generally antipathetic, and frequently hostile, towards that identity. In such a context, the importance of allegorical expression is perhaps evident. As a means of subverting the oppressors, of propagating cultural identity, allegory offers an opportunity to escape direct censorship. For the Polish Romantics, nostalgic lyricism frequently blended with historical memory to create an almost Illyrian vision of Polish freedom in the past, in deliberate contrast to the later subjugation to autocracy during the period of Partitions. For them, the past became an allegorical utopia, tinged with a faint afterglow of regret and longing.[5]

In general, such nostalgia-as-allegory adapts poorly to cinematic treatment. Where directors have tackled the pastoral idyll as a cinema genre, the films seem to become little more than pretty pictures for colour-supplement advertising. And there is always some confusion over the extent to which such films can translate into allegorical expression. For example: Wajda's hauntingly nostalgic pastorale, *The Young Ladies of Wilko*,[6] created some sense of confusion for his admirers—and not only in Poland. For many people, over-conscious of his past record, it was inconceivable that the politically committed director of *Man of Marble* (*Czlowiek z marmuru*, 1977) and *Rough Treatment* (*Bez znieczulenia*, 1979) could turn to an essentially unpolitical subject.

Polish film directors have been more alert to the possibilities of couching the Polish intellectual debate in futuristic terms, projecting present concerns and social trends into a future, allegorical utopia. This is, of course, intellectually respectable in the West. The best of post-War science fiction, in popular literature and on celluloid, has frequently reflected major social and political issues. If science fiction has perhaps been less common as an indigenous theme of Polish popular

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[2] *Dreszcze* (1981) was a prize-winner at the 1982 Berlin Film Festival, later withdrawn from circulation by the Polish authorities. This perceived official martyrdom endeared it to a particular type of film-goer.

[3] See, in ENCOUNTER (November 1985), Mark Le Fanu, "Andrei Tarkovsky".

[4] *Dziady* (*Forefathers' Eve*), Mickiewicz's anti-Czarist drama in verse, was published in several parts from 1823 to 1832. Its recent history, particularly of the controversial Part Three (1832), is as striking as the subject-matter. A performance at the Polish National Theatre in January 1968 was suppressed by the authorities, further inflaming a tense political situation. Following serious (student-dominated) unrest in the capital, the academic and student bodies at Warsaw University were purged, which removed from official intellectual life the few remaining exponents of Polish Marxist Revisionism. A notable student casualty was the young research historian, Adam Michnik.

[5] Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* (1834) is the most evocative work in this genre. Written in Paris after the failure of the 1831 Rising, it is a lengthy, mock-heroic evocation of an arcadian Polish-Lithuanian past. Its poignant nostalgia for a "lost" Poland, admittedly tinged with irony, gives it a particular significance for Poland's émigré communities. I suspect, though, that many overlook the implied criticism of the potential destructiveness in such an arcadian approach to the Polish past.

[6] *Panny z Wilka*, Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz's elegant novella of 1932, was adapted for the cinema by Wajda in 1979.

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literature,[7] the contemporary cinema has often successfully exploited futuristic themes. Science fiction has its uses, and two recent films have adopted the genre particularly effectively.

The dominant ideology of Juliusz Machulski's post-nuclear, radical feminist state closely resembles Milan Kundera's "world of grinning idiots"[8]—that vision of the totalitarian ideal made real which is somehow more terrifying than the present realities of ideological persecutions and permanent economic crisis. *The Sex Mission* (*Seksmisja*, 1984) depicts a future society, totally female, which is dominated by an élite of radical feminist ideologues and neurotics. Into this totalitarian Eden (the régime still preserves the apple tree with whose fruit Adam tempted Eve) come two men, survivors from a long-forgotten, pre-war cryogenics experiment. Their existence is a threat to a ruling élite which bases its ideology on a hatred of male society—some 50 years after the extinction of men in the nuclear war and its aftermath. In their attempt to escape elimination, the two men stumble into every possible absurdity of the feminist state, from the tiniest irritants (anti-smoking, anti-alcohol) to the fundamental lies at the heart of the system. The film is at times wickedly funny, although it has its *longueurs*; the greatest weakness is in the persistent carping at present-day feminist excesses, which irritates as much as it amuses. In the end, though, the film succeeds because it is not simply an anti-feminist tract, but a merciless, occasionally brilliant, dissection of Polish life in the 1980s.

A fantasy world of a different quality is created in Piotr Szulkin's bleak and uncompromising *The End of Civilisation* (*O-bi, O-ba, koniec cywilizacji*, 1984). Where Machulski's future world was at least affluent, Szulkin's post-nuclear utopia is one of unrelieved depression and barely concealed violence. Under a protective dome, a handful of disillusioned and apathetic survivors has been gathered by a brutal police régime. For the élite of this world, it is enough to feed and shelter the population. The apathy is countered by an escapist pretence of a religion which promises vague salvation from present despair, but which can't resolve a fatalistic impulse to reject this salvation and instead to welcome death. As the dome (the central part of the régime's claim to protect its subjects) begins to disintegrate, so the élite loses its self-control and authority. In the end, only grim survival is left, though even this can be seen as a futile exercise in self-delusion.

For all the differences in approach between these films, they are clearly exploring the same ideological concepts: of totalitarian repression and its impact on the individual. Juliusz Machulski's feminist élite preserves its anti-male ideology two generations after the last men have been eliminated; in Piotr Szulkin's police state, the enemies are the mysterious (and non-existent) "Boers", who caused the nuclear war. History is rewritten; art and literature exist only to serve the interests of the ideologues. Szulkin's vision is perhaps closer to the Polish experience: a society conscious of living on the edge of disaster (memories of the last War linger in Polish minds), where wealth is measured in wartime concepts of tiny privileges. But if Machulski is more ready than Szulkin to adopt Western cinema techniques (the opening sequence, in particular, owes a lot to *Doctor Strangelove*), his ideological position is strikingly similar. Both films delineate societies where self-conscious and uncertain régimes bolster authority with a mixture of material bribery, insistent propaganda and, as an undercurrent, the threat of force.

For the Slovak writer Ladislav Mnačko (in his novel *The Seventh Night*, 1969) Joseph Stalin had by September 1968 become a melodramatic villain whom the murderers of Czechoslovakia vilified in order to mask their complicity in the crimes committed in his name. Almost twenty years later, Soviet Eastern Europe has still failed to resolve the Stalinist dilemma. "The Stalinists" can be accused of virtually any offence, real or imagined—but the social order established after 1948 in the Soviet satellites has survived, immobile and largely inviolate. The apparatus of social control, if less obtrusive, has not been dismantled. Since Stalin's death, the entrenched bureaucratic structures which are loosely designated "Stalinist" have survived every attempted reform in every satellite country.

The Poles, in common with other Eastern European nations, have found it difficult to identify a coherent pattern of acceptable criticism or analysis of the recent past. In the presumed opinion of the leading figures within the entrenched bureaucracies, history is an element of analysis in the class struggle, and therefore susceptible of infinite amendment in the interests of the dominant ideology. Criticism of Stalin—and of those in the satellite states judged guilty of complicity with Stalin—cannot be permitted to develop into a fundamental critique of the Leading Social System. The economic and political excesses of Stalinism are, for Party ideologues in Eastern Europe, simply "errors of emphasis". There is nothing fundamentally wrong with the social system—simply a series of over-zealous (that is: incorrect) decisions. In every Eastern European country, historical analysis—particularly in the popular arts—can therefore be a risky matter: an arcane game of evading censorship by means of ellipsis or unspoken commentary.

Forty years of Marxist historiography in Poland has, however, failed to weaken the hold which a strongly nationalistic historical tradition has maintained over the popular consciousness since the 19th-century Era of Partitions. Milan Kundera's "President of Forgetting"[9] would find the Poles a difficult charge. The collective memory has always been strong, even during the earlier years of People's Poland, when the authorities were able to maintain a virtual monopoly over sources of information. Since this historical tradition is so strong, it has been common in the popular arts to draw heavily upon the collective memory, both to challenge current official interpretations of the past and—perhaps more important—to draw historical analogies

[7] Stanislaw Lem, the author of *Solaris*, is a notable exception.
[8] Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984).
[9] Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1982).

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to highlight present actions and events. As with Marxism, history in the service of an ideology—though not one with which the dominant ideology can feel entirely comfortable.

This interaction of past and present, the appeal to a nationalistic cultural tradition, is a fundamental legacy of Polish Romanticism. It is therefore hardly surprising to find in Marczewski's *Dreszcze*, alongside the deeply confusing mixture of cinematic lyricism and political commitment, an almost insistent plundering of the collective Polish memory—both as an alternative account of the Stalinist years, and as an act of historical analogy. The historical reconstruction, while hardly meticulous, does manage to portray the basic disparity between social aspirations and actual conditions: the overcrowded and anonymous housing; the late-night arrests and intimidations; official attempts to subvert children from their (often Catholic) parents. And the scout camp itself: claustrophobic, an enclosed world deliberately isolated from the rest of society; alternative information gained only with difficulty from foreign radio broadcasts, or from the whispered conversations of the camp leaders. And finally, as the ideology begins to crumble, increasing appeals to national pride, to patriotism. (I particularly enjoyed an awful song which was to celebrate the return of Poland's Western Territories from Germany.)

It is Marczewski's vision of this ideological collapse which has led many Poles to see in *Dreszcze* a cinematic work which points to the problems of Poland in the 1980s, an analysis through analogy of a social order whose legitimacy has been challenged, and thereby broken. The problem for the non-Polish observer is that the examples are so coded as to be virtually unintelligible: the newspapers people read, banner slogans untranslated in the subtitles, references to leading "patriotic" Communists of the period. As with the quotations from the Polish classics, one listens with some resentment to the knowing murmurs from a Polish audience, conscious that they are making all the required connections. Nothing is there by accident—except, perhaps, the trees which stay leafless through three seasons of the year.

Dreszcze demonstrates many of the vices which can afflict a Polish dramatic work. A potentially compelling drama has been unfortunately weakened in its impact because the director seems too closely aware of the double burden of Poland's Romantic and historical traditions. As a result, the end product is perhaps too Polish, accessible only to a highly parochial audience and a consequent disappointment to any outsider seeking to understand what it means to be Polish at such a cruel time.

STALINISM REMAINS something of a dilemma for Poles because they have not, in general, been obliged to take moral responsibility for their recent past. Excluded for the most part from the political process, in the early years still barely recovered from the emotional dislocation which resulted from the wartime experience, it was only fitfully that the nation at large was able to find its own voice of dissent. All too often, before 1980, protest was localised and therefore easily neutralised and forgotten. *In retrospect*, *Solidarity*'s lasting achievement is the fact that, for fifteen months, virtually every adult Pole, participating in a shared experience, learned much more about the recent past than official sources had ever revealed, and in so doing escaped the narrow confines of domestic experience for the first time since 1944.

Feliks Falk's compelling reconstruction of the Stalinist years, *And then there was Jazz* (*Byl Jazz*, 1984), reveals the extent of this change in attitudes. In a film which shows meticulous attention to the urban topography of Lodz in the 1950s, Falk traces the desperate attempts of a group of jazz enthusiasts, scarcely interested at all in politics, to perform their chosen music. Falk's Poland is a country where the ordinary citizen is isolated from everyone outside the family circle. Terror, never really absent, outside the home, is always understated: in late-night arrests, or in pleasantly innocuous security-service enquiries about friends and neighbours. Much more than Marczewski, Falk shows an innate understanding of the sheer monotony of life in the 1950s: poor housing, characterless cafés, overcrowded public transport. A world, in fact, where the physical conditions are as important as the totalitarian terror in crushing individualism and creativity. The young heroes, accused of anti-social non-conformism in wanting to perform music so redolent of "imperialist America", are forced to the margins of social life, before the events of 1956 finally reduce the cultural hysteria, enabling them to perform publicly without hindrance.

THE SOCIAL REINTEGRATION achieved in 1956 was of short duration. The new atmosphere of national unity began to break down almost as soon as the Party leadership weathered its initial crisis. For thousands of Poles, the easing of travel restrictions simply gave them the opportunity to leave Poland permanently—a personal response to "the Polish Question" which has been repeated many times since the Partitions. Each significant crisis since 1795 has prompted a fresh wave of emigration from Poles of every class and social group, from alienated intellectuals and artists to the landless peasantry or proletariat.

Clearly, the mass of Polish emigration has been non-political. For the millions of Poles who constituted such an important element in the urban proletariat of 19th-century North America, the uncertainties of life abroad represented a great improvement on the certainty of unrelieved poverty at home. The mere presence in exile of a significant section of what would have constituted the social and political élite of an independent Poland gave to Polish cultural expression an important émigré tradition. Mickiewicz, Norwid, Chopin—all produced much of their greatest artistic work in exile.

But the émigré writer is at least assured of a regular—if slowly declining—readership for his published Polish language material; a Polish film director in exile must adapt to the needs of audiences for the most part unfamiliar with Poland's cultural traditions. For some, assimilation is almost total. Roman Polanski's Hollywood output has successfully

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adapted to American conditions; and there is little enough in Walerian Borowczyk's stylish pornography-as-art to distinguish it from similar French products. Polish directors resident in the West have generally attempted to avoid Polish topics—almost as if they were reluctant to inflict their country on audiences which show little interest in Poland or its problems.

Andrzej Wajda's retreat from Polishness has been marked since 1981. His relationship with the Polish authorities has never been easy, although his international prestige and (perhaps more important) his potential for hard currency earnings have encouraged "official" Poland to allow him significant freedom of expression. But his artistic temperament, as much as anything, has effectively distanced Wajda, both from the authorities and from the artistic tradition which he has always found difficult to accept in its entirety.

This isolation needs to be seen in perspective. Wajda, an established box-office success for three decades, remains hugely popular in Poland, but along the way he has attracted criticism from those oppositional Poles for whom the long-established traditions of cultural expression remain eternally relevant. Since the early 1970s, Wajda has shown himself less willing to accept the categorical imperatives of Polish political Romanticism. For some, *Man of Iron* was a disappointment for its failure to provide a coherent apologia for the *Solidarity* experience.

In retrospect, this reluctance on Wajda's part has been implicit since his first international successes. Even in his earliest works, Wajda showed a relative lack of sympathy with Polish traditions. His Resistance trilogy of the 1950s can be interpreted as a criticism of the more extreme manifestations of Romantic struggle. *Ashes and Diamonds* (*Popiol i diament*, 1958) in particular is a film which rejects the amoral cynicism inherent in the Romantic tradition in favour of a more active opposition to the new régime (this was a significant departure from Jerzy Andrzejewski's 1947 novel, where the zeal of the doomed assassin Chelmicki is as misplaced as the traditionalism of the aristocrats).

Danton (1982), a perverse adaptation of Stanislawa Przybyszewska's play *Sprawa Dantona*, shows Wajda's impatience with any manifestation of extremism. Where Przybyszewska's play was a 500-page paean to Robespierre's revolutionary idealism, Wajda sees in the political destruction of Danton a manifestation of the corrosive effect of revolutionary extremism. Many Poles took the film to be an allegorical analysis of the *Solidarity* experience. This is to belittle Wajda's vision: Gérard Depardieu's overly human Danton is a perennial victim of extremism of whatever side.

Eine Liebe in Deutschland (1984) is equally far removed from the Polish mainstream. This adaptation of Rolf Hochhuth's documentary novel owes more to Claude Chabrol (in its study of small-town moralities) than to the moral absolutism of the Polish tradition. The farm worker whose affair with Hanna Schygulla's peasant woman forms the centrepiece of the film could easily have been Russian, or Hungarian. That he should be Polish is an accident of history.

"WHO GIVES A SHIT about Poland, anyway?" asks Rodak, the leading character in Jerzy Skolimowski's 1984 film, *Success is the Best Revenge*. Certainly Skolimowski's return to Polish themes is surprising. He spent his first decade in exile avoiding the subject of Poland, apparently aware of the West's basic lack of interest.[10] In 1981, he returned to Polish matters—almost as though to explain why, in the light of the *Solidarity* experience, Poland *does* matter. In the immediate aftermath of Martial Law, he rushed through his low-budget curiosity, *Moonlighting* (1982). The more reflective *Success is the Best Revenge* followed in 1984. In both films, Skolimowski explores the basic problem confronting Polish émigrés excluded from their homeland, and thereby condemned to watch the course of events, helpless, from the sidelines.

For the protagonists of *Moonlighting*, their wish to stay in England after Martial Law brings with it complications. Lacking work-permits, they are forced to rely on their—English-speaking—leader for a series of rather dubious, unregistered jobs. Unable to speak English, they must also rely on him for information on the situation in Poland. He in turn, desperate for their compliance in his schemes, feeds them false, optimistic information about the political situation. As Skolimowski has asked: was the leader behaving badly, in withholding the truth? or could his actions be seen as compassion for their feelings? The film was put together within weeks of Martial Law, on a budget so low that the edges are still rough. Despite this, I don't think anyone has come closer, in recent years, to depicting the claustrophobic and desperate world which a group of exiles, isolated by language and cultural outlook from their hosts, will inevitably create for themselves at such a trying time.

Success is the Best Revenge is more closely integrated into its English environment. As in *Moonlighting*, the Polish exiles follow the course of events, unable to do anything to help their compatriots. The hero, Rodak (played by Michael York), decides to mount a historical pageant for the English who, he feels, so misunderstand his country as to cause it serious harm. As he pursues his obsession, he alienates his adolescent son, hostile to his father's "play-acting" and forced to redefine his own cultural identity in a school where his fellow pupils have no interest in Poland's sufferings. On the whole, Skolimowski fails to analyse the problem of emigration beyond the most superficial levels; but on one point at least he struck a marvellously despondent note. Poland the bulwark of Christianity is a concept totally unfamiliar to the English. But when Poland beat England in a qualifying match for soccer's World Cup in 1973, suddenly everyone knew—perhaps for the first time—that Poland existed.

Skolimowski is the only émigré director who has been prepared in recent years to tackle specifically Polish topics, and it is instructive to note the extent to which he has abandoned or modified some of the more traditional Polish

[10] I can recall only one specific reference to Poland in Skolimowski's output from 1970 to 1981. A minor character in *Deep End* (1971) is seen reading his newspaper on a Tube journey. The newspaper in question is *Trybuna Ludu*, the Polish Party organ.

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concerns. Noticeably absent is any evocation of a "lost" Poland, a nostalgic land of innocence betrayed (*kraj lat dziecinnych*—Wonderland). To some extent, this will be a matter of personal choice. Not every Pole harbours visions of a lost Eden; and Skolimowski has been long enough resident in England to realise how circumscribed is our understanding of Poland and Polish culture.

But I believe that Skolimowski has identified a more basic, though incompletely delineated, shift in Polish attitudes. Emigration since (say) 1956 has brought to the West a more pragmatic quality of Pole, less responsive to the Romantic tradition than the older, pre-War generation. Perhaps it is difficult to invest the permanent crisis of People's Poland with any sort of nostalgic afterglow; perhaps even that dialectical materialism has made more of a subliminal impression than we imagined—though the heady symbolism of the *Solidarity* experience would suggest otherwise.

Whatever the reason, the nature of *Emigracja Polska* is in a process of evolution.

IF THE POLISH ARTIST has generally found it difficult to make any judgments of moral responsibility, this is largely the fault of a social system which sets the limits to the debate, and excludes heterodox opinion or expression from the official media. Independent civil society, where it exists (and it is, of course, theoretically impossible in a Marxist social system), is severely restricted, held together by an informal and uncertain network of clandestine publishing houses and almost conspiratorial discussion groups. Eminent writers and academics do, of course, attempt to pursue their interests outside official circles, and independent-minded historians have been assiduous in trying to untangle Poland's recent past. But since official Poland finds it difficult to know where to draw the line, the officially-acknowledged past remains incomplete. As a result, it is rare enough in the popular culture to find any work which tries to expose the real nature of People's Poland, its troubled history and its morally flawed present. Self-censorship (often for good motives) and official censorship can be relied on to sanitise the product, so that allegory, allusion, and metaphor will often be the only way forward.

How surprising, then, to come across such an accomplished masterpiece as Krzysztof Zanussi's *The Year of the Quiet Sun* (*Rok spokojnego slonca*, 1984), a bleak story of love and disillusion in Western Poland in the first, bitter post-War winter. Into a half-empty town in what used to be German territory comes a group of refugees from the East, among them Amelia, a pious and guilt-ridden war widow, and her sick (later, dying) mother. On the outskirts of the town, a mass grave of Allied prisoners-of-war has been discovered, and a team of British and American soldiers is investigating the site on behalf of the War Crimes Commission. An unlikely love-affair develops between Amelia and Norman, an unprepossessing and awkward American driver with the group. The lovers face many emotional and physical obstacles: Norman's gaucheness; Amelia's pious guilt at this betrayal of her dead husband's memory; economic hardship; official intransigence; and unofficial (though officially approved) intimidation and violence. "*Nie mamy żadnej szansy*", says Amelia; and, indeed, the final obstacles are too great. Norman encourages Amelia to leave with him for the West, but this can be done only with forged documents—and at the price of leaving her mother behind. Although her mother dies, Amelia refuses to leave. She gives her documents to a girl who is terrified that her past life—as a prostitute in a concentration-camp brothel—will lead to the exacting of retribution from the new Communist régime.

What makes the film so remarkable is Zanussi's careful reconstruction of a controversial episode in Poland's past: the expulsion of the Germans from territory given to Poland at the Potsdam Conference. For Zanussi to imply that this was not a heroic episode, that the authorities expelled the Germans with cruelty, that the same brutality sometimes turned against the Polish refugees from the East, is to challenge a powerful official myth. Zanussi's principal concern is to show the manner in which the two lovers were finally defeated by a cruel political system, but he treats the political and historical background as an uncontroversial, universally accepted fact.

It isn't, of course. He knows it, and his critics in the official media know it. He was attacked for reducing the heroic reconstruction of the Western Territories to a simple series of personal tragedies, and the film was banished to the film-club circuit in Poland. An essentially unpolitical—perhaps even anti-political—film thus takes on a deeper social significance. It's a rare, courageous attempt to show the Poles what was done in their name (they knew, but only anecdotally), and perhaps to take some moral responsibility for the events. It's a pity that "Sorry" doesn't figure overmuch in the political vocabulary of People's Poland.

OPTIMISM IS A RARE QUALITY in post-*Solidarity* Poland, and it is hard to imagine any real improvement in the climate for independent expression in a medium so important to the régime. For every film mentioned above, dozens of other truly awful films have flooded the Polish domestic market: trashy melodramas, tendentious war epics, mindless comedies. If the Poles are largely spared the tedious propaganda with which they used to be confronted, there is no sign of any real improvement in their intellectual diet. Like so much else in Polish life, thoughtful popular entertainment is at a premium. Since the state has an effective monopoly over the distribution of films throughout the country and can direct scarce resources as it chooses, the possibility of original, independent-minded talent being allowed to develop must be remote.

Directors can of course usually find ways round the most irksome aspects of official censorship, but this will be at the expense of making films so parochial that their appeal to audiences in the West will be restricted to those who understand the rules of the Polish intellectual game. It is becoming increasingly difficult for a cultural outsider to envisage watching a Polish film simply as entertainment; and if the headlong retreat into dense metaphor continues, it will become impossible for the non-Pole to learn anything about the country from its film output.

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The unfortunate Polish tendency towards cultural particularism can even seem calculated to exclude the outsider. In their fondness for exclusivity ("*Polacy, narodem wybranym*—The Poles, a chosen nation"), the Poles make heavy demands on the goodwill of Western film audiences. If watching a Polish film requires a profound understanding of Polish cultural traditions before it becomes intelligible; if the Poles themselves (particularly in emigration) insist on criticising outsiders for "not understanding" Poland; if all Poland's film output is accepted or rejected for its "understanding" of the Polish situation—then the Poles should not be surprised if Western film-goers react with suspicion and growing impatience to an intellectual game from which they feel excluded.

One looks in vain for some sense of proportion, of intellectual detachment. Over-intellectual introspection is a Polish vice, over-indulgence in pretty conceits an almost inevitable consequence of such introspection. At times, as in the worst of Jacobean poetry, the intellectual game swamps the message: cultural acrobatics for the sake of making an impression. One feels like an experimental rat, in a cage of the director's making.

This is not to suggest that Poland is no longer capable of inspiring good films, though it is significant that both Wajda and Zanussi have preferred to work overseas, with Western funding, in recent years. *The Year of the Quiet Sun* is, by any standards a film as good as any we have seen lately; while Krzysztof Kieślowski's latest feature, *No End* (*Bez Końca*, 1984, which appeared in London too late to be included in the body of this study), is an immensely powerful analysis of martial-law Poland.

But Polish cultural particularism, and an insistent official censorship, narrows the room for manoeuvre. It is not so surprising that *No End*, a deeply pessimistic film which shows a divided Poland and a society in stasis, should be criticised by the official media and the oppositional press alike. The tragedy is that the present opposition, mindful of the dead weight of the Romantic tradition, seems as unwilling as the discredited authorities to break the social impasse. The state of siege is insistent and seemingly unbreakable.

Panopticon

Fifty pop-up pictures, an index
Of where they travelled and with whom—
A Muscovite bell, the Alhambra, Baalbek,
The Reichenbach Falls and, time and again,
Mountains, glaciers, perilous bridges,
Subservient moraines.

One in five, in colour, shows
The family, skilfully arranged
In Monsieur Claudet's London studio—
Here is Nanny with the youngest boys
And here, Louisa, next to a mirror,
Posing with immodest poise.

How steadily they gaze, not minding
That somehow the ark has leaked a little,
Letting in an ironclad grinding
Somewhere off Cape Hellas—as well
As a bird's-eye view of a railway station
Clearly a target for shells.

One-handed we can flick them through
Their circular tour at whirlwind speed—
Here they are again, still viewing
The nacreous *Sehenswürdigkeiten*
Of the 1850s: blandly aloof,
Quite impossible to frighten

But finally just too disconnected,
Too finely cut out in three dimensions.
Look at the distance between flat objects,
How each pebble glows and glows:
Between their eyes and ours that watch
The dead ground grows and grows.

Lawrence Sail

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IN THE MARGIN

Strangers in a Promised Land

Conversations in Israel—By MELVIN J. LASKY

"Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, o children of Israel? saith the Lord. . . ."

AMOS *9:7*

I SHOULD have known better but I didn't. I had the golden opportunity when travelling in Ethiopia some 25 years ago to divine the shape of things to come, to sense the signs of a secret prophecy—the return to Zion of the remnant of the "lost tribe" of Dan, as prophesied in *Isaiah 11:11* ("a people tall and of glossy skin" amid "the buzzing of wings"), and also in *Zephaniah 3:10* ("from beyond the rivers of Cush, my worshippers, my scattered people"). But I had misread the texts, was even oblivious to them, and indeed more interested in the Marxist pamphlets of the ill-fated Army rebels who had been hanged by the Emperor in Addis Ababa's Menelik Square. I registered General Mengistu Newaye's last words, "Tell them the seed we sowed has taken root", and I ventured the prediction that here was the "1905" that would lead to "1917". And so it came to pass. But the neo-Biblical drama which was to unfold in the next quarter-of-a-century remained rather a closed book.

Not that I wasn't curious and even concerned. I had flown up to Gondar and drove out to the north-west to see the Falasha community, the "black Jews" of Solomonic heritage; or did it all begin with Moses who (*Numbers 12:1*) "had married an Ethiopian woman"? What had changed here in the thousands of years?

On a little hill, just off the Italian tar road, we found a small Falasha village. Families were sitting huddled on stones, in front of their mud huts, among the cows, chickens, dung. Did they have a Bible? They hadn't, but an elder assured us that they had all been that day to Sabbath services. As I noted in my journal, ". . . and a young woman (wearing an Ethiopian silver cross) sauntered forth to bring us some illustrated brochures which none of them could read (in English and Hebrew, printed in Tel Aviv by the Israeli Information Department)." Might I have jumped to the conclusion that here was an historic connection which would in time lead to what has been called *Operation Moses*?

I jumped to other conclusions. The study by the estimable scholar Edward Ullendorff, on the "Hebraic-Jewish Elements in Abyssinian (Monophysite) Christianity", had pointed to the surmise that the Falashas, reciting their Biblical prayers in the ancient Ethiopic language of Ge'ez, had been lost in time like their Coptic neighbours. Among the monks meditating on the little islands of Laka Tana I sensed the entanglement in a spiritual and emotional passivity bordering on vegetation. Didn't the Jews share in the general fossilisation? They were not seekers, neither of the Law nor of Justice. They knew no Hebrew and had not heard of the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud*. . . . Gibbon's phrase had captured the spirit of the place: "forgetful of the world by whom they were forgotten."

THIS FORGETFULNESS was, like all historic projections, transient. The Marxist Revolution came to pass, destroyed the monarchy and displaced the Church, socialised the economy, and planned man-made famines. The Israeli state delivered arms to the Dergue and schemed the deliverance of "the lost tribe". The Falashas, more than 10,000 of them, old and young (but average age 14), trekked north to Sudan where they were airlifted secretly to Brussels and then on to the Ben Gurion airport tarmac which they kissed on reunion with Zion.

The story of the "Mosaic flight" has been told,[1] and I flew to Jerusalem to look into the aftermath of the miraculous emigration, of the "tempest-tossed, the poor and huddled masses yearning to be free. . . ." This time I came to listen, and perhaps to get it right.

[1] See Tudor Parfitt, *Operation Moses: The Untold Story of the Exodus of the Falasha Jews from Ethiopia* (Weidenfeld, 1985).

Also Edward Alexander, "Operation Moses", in *Commentary*, July 1985 (and the ensuing correspondence: September/December 1985); Leon Wieseltier, "Brothers and Keepers: Black Jews and the Meaning of Zionism", in *The New Republic*, 11 February 1985; and Helga Hegewisch, "Die Falashen in Israel", in *Der Monat* (December 1986).

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An Elder Statesman in Retirement

DO NOT misunderstand what I am trying to say. Not all problems must always be seen in their largest context. I know someone once said that the truth lies in the detail. But how easy it will be to get lost in details! The theologians will give you Biblical and Talmudic references. The bureaucrats will give you statistics. The journalists will tell you about human-interest stories, and the sociologists about trends and structures. I hear that there are even a few anthropologists running round, and oh! that means "culture patterns" and "integral disharmonies". . . .

No, my only advice to you is to try and see the whole episode in the largest context. If you're looking for the truth, you won't find it in the details but in the deepest meanings. You know, there is a story that Halévy tells of his first journey to find the Abyssinian Jews in the 1870s. He tried to win their confidence as a fellow-Israelite by crying, "I am also a Falasha!"

And the reply came from these long-lost descendants of Dan, son of Jacob, "What! you are a Falasha! a white Falasha! You are laughing at us—are there any white Falashas?"

Well, we are the white Falashas . . . and now that the black Falashas are among us (or at least most of them), we have to ask who we authentically are, what unites (and separates) us. The entire *Operation Moses* is really an undertaking to discover who we are and what we represent. That is why it is so central to us, and not merely an exercise in "absorbing" yet another wave of emigrants which we have done so regularly since 1948. This time we went out to get them in a kind of sacred mission, a holy obligation (and the term *Operation Moses* has a valid echo). The rescue was as much for us as for them. We needed to rediscover and indeed to reaffirm what it is that the whole "return to Zion" is all about. Many feel we have begun to lose our way in the pressing everyday realities of diplomacy, parliamentary government, the idols of the market-place. If we still are a "chosen people", what is it truly that we have been chosen to do?

I found the other day—and even old atheists sometimes get around to reading the *Talmud*—this passage (I'll give it to you: it's *Yevamot 79a*):

> "Three characteristics does this [Jewish] people possess: they are merciful, modest, and perform deeds of kindness."

Would that it were true for all, and for ever! But what I am trying to say is that *Operation Moses* has put this ideal to the test of our minds and hearts. Can we show ourselves every day, in the appalling human difficulties of the return of an ancient tribe, to be merciful, modest, kind?

I know, having been active in practical politics for so long, that religious precepts are not exactly usable civic guidelines. What can a politician or statesman do with Hillel's dictum, "*What is hateful to you, do not do to others*"? Or with Rabbi Akiva's echo of "Love your neighbour as yourself"? I was taught that, when Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai posed the question, "Which is the good way to which a man should cleave?", among all the ethical replies he received he favoured that of Rabbi Eleazar ben Arakh: "*a good heart*", because presumably this quality is inclusive of all the others.

WHAT ELSE AM I READING? Well, it is not only the religious sages (despite my citations). Still, in one's last days whatever one turns to look at seems to be curiously, dramatically apt, as if experience and wisdom were finally about to converge. Having been unhappy about the charges against an "imperial Israel" (the Lebanon war and all that), I began reading Rudyard Kipling and I found this:

> *. . . the end of the fight is a tombstone white,*
> *with the name of the late deceased*
> *And the epitaph drear: "A fool lies here*
> *who tried to hustle the East."*

We must never become reduced to the role of an Eastern hustler. Not that we should be, in the old Biblical bravura, "a light unto the nations"—but at least a light unto ourselves. I agree here with my friend Ya'acov Hazen, now also in his 80s, that to take away just a few elements of Jewish fate "would turn Israel into a small provincial country in the Middle East."

One of these elements is the Diaspora. On the one hand we always wanted to end it, to announce the "ingathering of the exiled Tribes of Judah" (as with the tribe of Dan in far-away Cush); on the other hand, what would we be without it? Without, for example, the American Jews (and I don't mean only the "big givers", but also the scientists, the educators, the artists . . .).

And what an irony is here! We began our dream of Zion, with Herzl and the others, in the desperate belief that only in our own Homeland could we find safety. Who could be secure in a world of marauding anti-Semites? Destruction loomed. We had to gather ourselves together, and be strong in Zion.

And today? In a bitter paradox of history, nowhere is the Jew more threatened than in Israel. Enemies still surround us everywhere. We have to go on living with the spectre of yet another Holocaust. . . . In this light what a vivifying experience was the rescue of the ancient Jews of Cush, the so-called Falashas, a people who were in greater and more immediate danger, who needed us, who gave us the feeling that our mission was not in the past, but in the life-saving present! I say this not with the pride, the hubris, of the young Zionist I once was, but with the gratitude of an old man whose faltering faith and confidence may in the end be restored.

Well, now go on to your refugee camps, and to the beehive of social work and administration. Talk to your experts and their critics. Put it all down on paper. Record it. . . . But don't forget the heart of the matter, and it is the last ancient

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saying I give you on your way: "Save the life and soul of one human being, and you save a whole world. . . ."

A High Immigration Official in Beersheva

I AM GLAD you seem to be impressed with the effort to "absorb" the Ethiopian Jews. But you must remember you are looking at the second and much better half of the operation—the thousands who came in 1984, with the desperate and dangerous *Operation Moses*—and not at the first half, the thousands of Falashas who came quietly before that, and none the less caused such a bewildering and even chaotic impact. . . . Looking back at it now—and I myself was just as naive and ignorant and even arrogant (they go together in our social-work mentality) as all the others in the Welcome-to-Zion drama of the '80s—we must have made every mistake in the book.

But from whom were we supposed to learn? From you British and the hooliganised mess you've made of your inner cities by making a "racist" mishmash of browns and blacks and whites? From you Americans and your sad Ellis Island experience when all immigrants were simply filed and forgotten? From the West Germans, maybe, who imported millions of Turks, integrated them into their factories but not into their communities, and gave them all civic rights but citizenship? . . .

At least we tried to learn from ourselves. But you might be right: history suggests that in trying to avoid the mistakes of last time one usually goes on to make the mistakes of this time! . . .

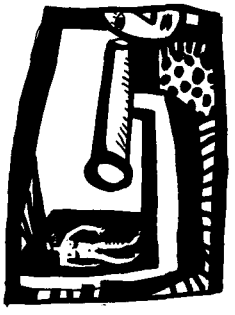
The "last time" for us was the mass immigration in the 1950s which doubled the Israeli population almost overnight—Jews from the whole crescent of North Africa, from Yemen to Morocco. . . . What we did wrong then we wanted to put right now. But as circumstances would have it the problem was infinitely more complex. The Sephardim, even in the worst Libyan or Algerian ghetto, were somehow part of the civilised Mediterranean world. Here with the Falashas of the Gondar and the Tigre area we had the impression we were dealing with primitive tribes trying to step out of the Middle Ages. This was, for the most part, superficial and ill-informed. But, still, every cluster of their habits and customs was profoundly different.

And then there was the colour: pitch black! Jews, I am afraid, have the same chromatic sensitivities as everybody else. And only the burning memory that Zionism had fought for an Israel that was to be a homeland for all Jews—and these Falashas were Jews, if not exactly one of the "lost tribes" of ancient Judah—could forge the link of sympathy and solidarity, of tolerance and often even of love, between us and these strangers in the promised land. . . .

I have been, over the years, depressed and even desolate. Would we be creating new kinds of "ghettos" for other kinds of Jews? Would the end-result be a permanent under-class of unemployable refugees?[2] Or could they become in the course of a few generations pretty much "like us" which they themselves wanted so much to be? Would they continue to be, as so many reports from the immigration camps wailed, "difficult . . . contrary . . . unreliable . . . passive . . . unassimilable . . ."? I am now far more hopeful. We have learned. They have learned. The whole nation is involved in a "learning process". I think we have mastered a great many other lessons in "the school of Israelisation". Children from the *shtetl* beyond-the-Pale became scientific farmers and professional soldiers. Cantankerous old men who couldn't run a *shul* together became diplomats and even world statesmen. A people who could mumble only a few ancient phrases from torn prayer-books remodernised a language and established a reputable Hebrew university for modern learning and science.

No, if we know anything it is how to learn and to adapt, and what the meaning is of patience and tolerance. I very much pray that the chapter about the Falashas in our Jewish history will turn out to be one of the proudest. . . .

A Social Worker in Natanya



WHEN I BEGAN working with Ethiopian cases I was a *somchot*, a kind of "house mother", a non-professional assistant. As "case operators" we were supposed to supervise each family for which we were responsible at least once a day. And what responsibilities! Everything came our way. Medical problems—and what could I know of tropical parasites? Shopping expeditions—and how should I know that their buying of their traditional strong beer was not something I should discourage? Moving into a fourth-floor apartment—and some got dizzy at the unprecedented heights, and others could never quite get the mysterious hang of lighting a brand-new gas stove, and especially how to keep it burning low all through the Sabbath. . . .

I don't really know what "book" you're thinking of, but all right, I suppose it'd be true to say that most of us made about every mistake in the book it's possible to make! To many of the office workers the Ethiopian Jews, so strange,

[2] *The Jerusalem Post* (20 May 1986) reported that "Ethiopians are being concentrated in potential 'ghettos', despite a master plan which calls for their integration within the population."

The charge was made by the chairman of the Public Council for Ethiopian Jewry, Mrs Yael Rom, although she later explained to me that this was more of a "warning shot" than a statement of fact. Still, there had been cases where mayors refused to connect water and electricity to Ethiopian immigrants' housing.

Was this "prejudice"? Not really, she said. Evidently it was the only way left for them to warn the authorities that they could not handle more immigrants. Their towns could not provide the "special services" (social work, extra tutoring, etc.) which the newcomers needed. Nevertheless, the *Post*'s stark headline read: "ETHIOPIAN JEWS BEING PUSHED INTO GHETTOS".

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so different, seemed contrary and even stupid. They never showed up on time. They said yes and never understood the question. We should have appreciated how frightened and confused they actually were!

Of course we had to take them by the hand, literally, and take them on a short walk to the bank or the post office or the bus-stop. On the one hand we may have been a shade over-solicitous, yet on the other hand we wanted to be "realistic" and get them used to the real life they would be living once they got out of the "absorption centre", the "camp" or the "barracks" or, actually, the little community-centres where they were getting their basic training and learning enough Hebrew to get by on. All this time we were subsidising them, and so they had pocket-money for expenses (and sometimes rather more than that when they picked up odd jobs). With the extra money they were able to buy the fancy radios and colour TVs you were asking about. Also the shiny velvet sofas and chic French dressers you can see in the packing-cases in the corridors. By the time this particular family leaves our absorption centre, what we call the *merkaz klita*, they sure will have been absorbed, at least externally.

INTERNALLY? How should I know? We know no Amharic to speak of, and they learn Hebrew only haltingly. Whole semesters went by, practically wasted, until we learnt to separate the men from the women—that's hard on us progressive women, proud of our rights!—and the old from the young. Wives would refrain from showing themselves better than their husbands, and quick-witted kids would never volunteer to correct their revered elders. Given their old tribal psychologies from Africa, there was too much shame and embarrassment in the classroom to make for learning efficiency. . . .

To the extent that we can communicate I am convinced that we are giving them what they want. Maybe they *shouldn't* want it. It could be that they won't accumulate for a whole generation enough information about the Israeli, Western-style life, indeed about the 20th century into which they have been catapulted, to make a *proper* choice. And by then all the options will have been closed. Still, no doubt about it, they are all opting now for learning, schooling, training, getting a job, getting ahead, becoming "like an Israeli".

Will they? Well, it all depends on their anthropology, and our sociology. They bring with them a very tenuous family structure, with easy divorces and many single-parent households. Will these be able to take the hard knocks of our urbanised life? We made many mistakes in "absorbing" the immigrants from North Africa in the 1950s. Are we learning in time to make a thorough success—psychologically as well as economically—with these new Jews who should be giving us so much hope that our original Zionist ideal is alive and vibrant?

I remember one party I went to. It was a celebration, a festival—and we played our music, served our food, did our dances. Oh, we meant well, even if we were a little thoughtless. When in Zion do as the Zionists do, etc. But didn't *they* have a culture, with songs and snacks and rhythmic dances of their own?

Today, in dealing with the second wave of immigrants—the latest thousands of *Operation Moses*[3]—we are all better, more sensitive, on a higher level. The office doesn't refer to "family fragments" any more. We know that for the Ethiopians their home-made beer was an important element in their traditional diet, and in any case was important for their socialising routines. We now always knock on the front door when we enter an immigrant's apartment. We realise that the names they have been registered under are not really their true names, and in any case these names keep on changing when a father or grandfather dies. Most of all, we have become aware that *we* are not supposed to be sitting in judgment on *them* ("are they bright and diligent enough?")—when they have every right to sit in judgment on *us*! What kind of Zion is this where so few keep the Sabbath? Can this really be the land that floweth with milk and honey? Who are they whose Rabbis dare to ask us whether we are truly and fully and authentically Jews when their flock have little faith and are mostly living a secular life far from God's prayers? . . .

I know it sounds banal to say that we are learning from each other, but maybe "getting used to each other" is better. I won't deny it—in the beginning there was even "race prejudice", especially in those days when the Chief Rabbis were hemming and hawing about the need to go through a few extra rituals (immersion, a symbolic recircumcision). The Falashas *were* black, darker than our Yemenites, more distant than our Moroccans. True, the Bible talks about the lost Hebrew tribesmen in "Cush". But when an Israeli schoolboy calls an Ethiopian schoolmate a "Cushie", you've got a bloody fight on your hands. It's as bad as calling an Italian a wop or an Englishman a limey—or a Jew a kike. In some of our factories they have run up against working-class discrimination against the "*kushivot*" (negroes) who are harshly said to be "worse than the Arabs".

WILL, AS YOU THINK, cleaning up our vocabularies help? Maybe. All right, "Cush" and "Falasha" should not really be terms of opprobrium, but badges of honour, of faith in history and human survival.

But the emotions are coming around faster than the words. They *are* Jews, and even the Rabbis (or almost all of them)

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[3] According to the official statistics, *Operation Moses* brought 5,438 Ethiopian Jews to Israel between 21 November and 31 December 1984. During the next month (January 1985), before the "press leaks" exploded the viability of the secret operation, another 1,000 were airlifted from the Sudan.

The figures in the previous years, before the onset of the "emergency" in the Ethiopian hunger crisis, were:

1972-79	268
1980	209
1981	956
1982	891
1983	2,205
1984 (to 21 Nov.)	2,388

In the total of 14,305 Ethiopians, there were about 3,300 families (averaging 3.9 members each), and 2,000 singles. About 30% of the families had only one parent. (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 May 1986)

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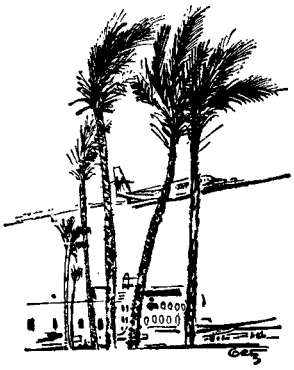
appear to agree. They are our people, come home to Zion. And they are a beautiful people! Did you take a good look at those children this morning in the kindergarten? They are enchanting. And many of them are *sabras*, born in this country and coming into their full human rights. Don't you worry about it, they will be the scientists and the scholars and the pilots in our future. You saw the picture on the *Jerusalem Post*'s front page this morning? President Herzog was giving medals of honour to a dozen Israeli soldiers, and one of them was a black Ethiopian corporal.

Don't you worry, in the years to come they will be given love and respect. I know these are not civic emotions which are in particularly long supply in our country. But I've now worked with thousands of these wondrous, tragic, unbelievable strangers who for a thousand dark years dreamed of the promised land, of "next year in Jerusalem". Now they're here, and believe me they will "make it"; they have to, as much for our sake as for theirs. . . .

The Cabinet Minister in Jerusalem



YOU'VE COME just in time—the strike is still on but it will be settled any day now. And if you examine the whole complicated situation carefully, you'll get a real insight into the nature of the problem I have to deal with now. I wasn't in charge—*don't smile*, I've been in charge only in the last four months, and *somebody else* in *another* government made the decisions—but still we have to get out of the crisis honourably.

In the beginning the Ethiopian Jewish immigrants were sent out to towns and cities all over the country, to be examined, processed, registered, trained, reunited with their families, taught a little Hebrew, and the like. Some went up to the north, some to the south, even if everybody really wanted to go to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The strike has been on in Eilat for several weeks now. Hundreds of families sit every day in front of my Ministry offices. We can't move them, and don't want to. They have a legitimate complaint, and they have a right to protest. What do they want? They want to move somewhere else, anywhere else. Why? It's just "too damned hot".

Well, I suppose somebody in the bureaucracy thought they'd be doing "the Africans" a favour by sending them down to the sunny shores of the sea. Eilat is, after all, a beautiful and popular place. But the Falashas—and indeed the Ethiopians—didn't live in the tropical lowlands near the sea but in the cool highlands. So we will now simply have to consent to move them. That's all there is to it. I cannot, and will not, force these people, our people, to live or work in any place against their will. . . . The only point of difficulty was that, in my appeal to them the other day in Eilat, I asked them to give me three months' time. In that time I could scrape together the necessary houses, apartments, places to live they would need. Also their children could finish their school terms without interruption.

Any luck, you ask? I'd need more than luck. Not a chance! They wanted to go *now*! No waiting, no postponements! Immediately! . . . You see, some of them have been here for a couple of years already, and at least this much they have already learned well: some demands are non-negotiable. Especially when "the other side", namely me, is not in a position to negotiate, and as a matter of fact wants to give them their wishes to their hearts' desire. So they'll all be leaving tomorrow, or the next day. I don't know as yet where I'm going to put all the families. I hope the teachers in the various schools will understand when a whole bunch of new pupils, with bright little shining faces, gets dumped on them. But "understanding" is not what is scarce around here. Jobs, space, living accommodation—that's where the shoe pinches. . . .

I see your point. You want to challenge the "fundamental" aspect of our policy. You think that a people coming out of the 14th or 15th century should not be plunged so roughly into the 20th. Couldn't they be kept together in some "tribal" or "ethnic" integrity by going into *kibbutzim* or *moshavim*, staying close to the land, trying their hand at what they know best, agriculture?

Well, if this were the 1950s this might be the proper perspective, and some such solution might—just *might*—be on. But, alas, all the facts and factors are stacked against this. *One*, even if they have strong familial tendencies, they are not collectivist-minded—and I suspect the cooperative nature of our agricultural communities would not quite suit their temperaments. . . . *Two*, we are in a serious economic crisis, marked by agricultural over-production (we have too few export markets for our overflowing crops) and governmental deficits. How will we be able to subsidise for years, for decades, the subsistence farming of a retrained peasantry struggling to learn scientific methods? Do you know that more than half of all our farming is in the hands of university graduates? How will the Falashas compete? . . . *Three*, they just don't want to go on to the farm. I am told they have come to hate anything associated with their lowly peasant status in old Ethiopia. They want the big cities. They want to learn a trade, earn a salary, buy things. How can I force them to do what they don't want to do? We have run questionnaires, conducted interviews, commissioned Gallup polls. The results all come out to the same—they don't want the country, they want to become city folk.

YES, AS A SOCIALIST and a Zionist I'll concede the point of your historical irony. You think I should not cut them off from the "sacred land"—and how come I'm so enthusiastic about inspiring them to "make their own way", to "go private" and be "independent", to "work hard and get ahead", all bourgeois and even capitalistic slogans? . . . But really, the land is not for them. It'll be a long hard slog before they can ever become good and efficient farmers, even if we

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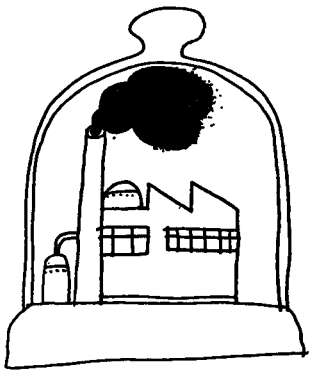
had the land for them to dig and plant as well as the personnel to show them how.

I may regret it, but I have no choice. And in any event *their choice* is not something I would ever want to go against. It may be short-sighted or not "fully informed" (how could it be?); but it's a hard fact that there is no other option. We must help them to succeed where careers are possible. The operative category is "gainful employment"—and, I'm happy to say, near a "good school" for their children. There's a fair future there. . . .

An Industrial Sociologist in Haifa



IF YOU WANT TO, I suppose you can bring Max Weber, and Ferdinand Tönnies, and all the others into it. We are, then, faced with the abrupt, almost surgical transplantation of a whole people from a *Gemeinschaft* into a *Gesellschaft*. Families that survived for a thousand years on subsistence farming have now to make do each month with something which we tell them obscurely is their net pay packet (allowing-for-inflation). An Ethiopian Falasha bread-winner (if bread is what he ate) has moved overnight from the peasant world of a pre-Modern community into the proletariat of a post-Industrial society. And I, of all *zaddiks*, am supposed to give advice on how to get them into jobs so that they do not become an abject and forlorn under-class in the Israeli economy?

I sometimes cynically envy the brilliant and cruel Arab/PLO solution. Keep the refugees in miserable camps. Don't move them, don't absorb them! One fine day give an entire young generation, eager for something to do that will get them out, intensive courses in training—for guerrilla warfare! A year will make a professional terrorist; six months, a nimble-fingered bombster or wily hostage-taking kidnapper; four-minutes-of-hate-a-day, a suicidal Mercedes martyr. And if they are pious in their faith, Allah's wonderful rewards are certain and guaranteed: ultimate heavenly bliss. . . .

Judaism, for better or worse, is a far more this-worldly and secular affair. Once the Falashas were accepted as "Jews", however this was to be defined theologically (and the issue has, I think, to all intents and purposes been resolved), they were citizens according to our basic "Law of Return"—and thus automatically put on the electoral roll as voters and on to the labour-exchange lists as workers. They get enrolled for training or, if you wish, "retraining", in workshops and technical colleges. Of course, in the beginning only the lowest rungs of the employment ladder will be open to them. They could, given a barely adequate command of the language, hardly be available for clerical jobs. I know that the various courses must, to some, be outlandish experiences: how to hold a pencil properly and to draw straight graph lines, how to sit quietly and patiently in a classroom and learn some fundamentals of mechanics and electricity. Will they be able to sit in front of a control panel and watch dials? Or isn't it better to offer them skills like welding and carpentry where they "can see the result"? In the end the awful question still remains. Will they get stuck at the lowest socio-economic rank in the country? Or will some—many, if not all—be able to move up in the system?

I REMEMBER ONE CASE of a young man—he had already been repeatedly docked a day's pay for lack of punctuality—who did not turn up for a month. He was suspended. Later it turned out that his father had died, and this in ancient Ethiopian Jewish custom calls for a month of mourning and inactivity. . . . No, the problems of formal learning and of new disciplined work-habits are formidable. We have to help a seriously disadvantaged work-force. The peasant background is of no use, nor is the smattering of skills some bring with them (gunsmithing, pottery, weaving—none of which, alas, are marketable in Israel). So many local employers react negatively, finding them "lazy", "chronic absentees", "undependable", etc. We break our heads over questions like whether the motivations are strong enough—whether their own prejudices aren't handicaps (some feel that, as Jews, they shouldn't be subject to Arab managers, which sometimes happens)—whether certain ethnocentric attitudes in our own working class about "those black fellows" isn't also a hampering factor. . . .

And, oh, that very modern mystery, what Marx called *the cash nexus*! Money has suddenly become the thing that makes their world go round. Of course we are making every effort to see that they don't sink into a permanent state of governmental dependency. But they begin by getting pocket money, and then stipends for learning and training, and then extra subsidies to supplement their meagre wages. How do we teach them to keep a budget, and dissuade them from going on shopping sprees? Even in the *merkaz*, the absorption centre, you will see brand-new ten-speed bicycles, colour television sets, chronometer watches of the most expensive makes. Who amongst us is wise and gentle and persuasive enough to teach them to try and live modestly? And, even harder, to hold on to certain traditional virtues and dignities and, at the same time, to adjust their old ways and attitudes?

One man was offered a job in a clothing factory as a sewing-machine operator and mechanic; but he refused the job—because only women were working there. On the one hand, they rightly fear being isolated as a "Black Community" in a ghetto; on the other hand, they want to stay together as extended families, close to all their relatives. Ethiopian Jews traditionally count kin to seven degrees of relationship—that's a hell of a lot of seventh cousins to help get jobs in one market-place! . . .

Let's face it! The elderly (and, by pre-*Moses* Ethiopian standards of longevity, that means almost everyone over *thirty*) are probably "doomed to spend an unsatisfactory life in an environment they barely understand" (the sad words are from our official report). For the others, all things are possible. I know one welder who, with his uncle a diamond-

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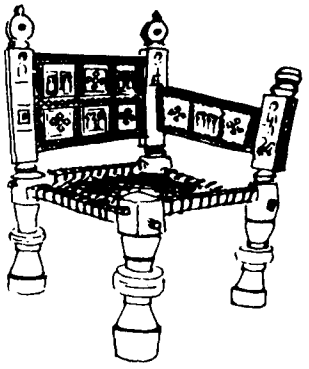
cutter, is deep into playing the Israeli stock-market. What better sign of adaptation can there be than this!

But, seriously, all immigration is a painful, difficult process. This particular one is an incredible drama, an unprecedented experiment, a piece (so it seems to me) of sheer social-science-fiction. But, remember, when *we* started we thought of realising Utopia. When *they* came they dreamt of finding the paradise of Zion. All life is a process of sobering up. If we try hard enough we will all be finding ourselves.

An Art Critic & Antiquities Dealer in Tel Aviv



NO, AS YOU CAN SEE, I don't carry any of the so-called Falasha folk art—neither the "post-traditional" nor the "quasi-traditional". I suppose that there are old and genuine pieces from the Gondar area which have great value and can command substantial prices. But almost everything which is on the market today here and in Jerusalem, or indeed elsewhere, belongs rather to the business of souvenirs and trinkets. . . .

Not that I have anything against this kind of business! I can only wish our Ethiopian co-religionists well in their efforts to show enterprise and find profitable markets. But even if all those little ceramic figurines are striking and evocative, they are not, I am afraid, art. There is always a catch in the art world when collectors come along and talk about something being "traditional". And, not being either anthropologists or historians, they haven't the slightest idea of when the traditions began, the day before yesterday often being the case! Nowadays, with the exotic presence of thousands of Ethiopian women, most of them eager to make something of the "women's lib" which has been thrust upon them, we find small workshops springing up around the country. Working with simple fire-and-clay processes they make interesting figures and also Biblical scenes, and are busy producing for the various tourist organisations and shops. Some of their supporters help them improve their "efficiency" by helping them to make, or to purchase, better kilns. Valuable old museum pieces are even being imported in order to provide more impressive models to copy. But all this gets further and further away from, in its real meaning, folk or traditional art. It is, as I say, a lovely thing to be happening to the hard-pressed *Beta Israel* tribes. *C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas le vrai art.* . . .

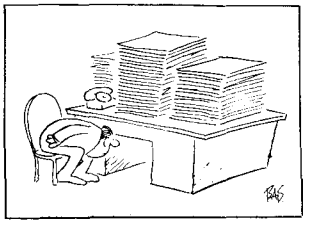
Don't misunderstand me, I'm not being snobbish. I have nothing against toys and trinkets. I have an uncle (on my mother's side) who has a nice shop full of them in Notting Hill Gate. Perhaps you know it, just off the Portobello Road. But this problem of pseudo-traditions is itself an old one, and we have had it throughout Africa (except, maybe, for the Benin bronzes), not to mention all those blankets and baskets throughout America's Wild West Indian areas. I rather suspect Margaret Mead, and even Malinowski, were quite taken in by their own goodwill and the natives' ingenuity. . . .

It began in Ethiopia long before the Falasha drama of *Operation Moses* and *Operation Sheba*. In the 1920s and '30s there was much attention paid to "fertility idols", and how what had become a major staple of the tourist trade was once long ago associated with "fertility cults". There was very little to any of this, and scholars soon established what had actually happened. It was yet another case of a sudden and inspired invention of a tradition. European wives or American missionaries—and, later, all those nice student Aid-workers so eager to help—wanted to promote arts and crafts, and encourage travellers to visit and buy. They would show pictures of prehistoric art to the Falasha women in the villages, and soon they had their authentic imitations.

And today, as you no doubt have seen in our immigration camps and resettlement projects, clay statuettes are being cheerfully produced. It's okay, go ahead and buy a few. I have a whole collection, for the children and the entire family. Even one of Solomon and Sheba making love in their royal bed. But don't be under any illusions about the nature of the "tradition" which is being "preserved" in this way. I sometimes wonder how many women who never ever produced such figurines in Ethiopia are doing so here and now. . . .

It may not be so good for art, but it certainly is excellent for the employment figures. . . .

A Senior Civil Servant in the Knesset



THE MAJOR QUESTION, at least for us in the bureaucracy, was how to deal with the *Beta Israel* community—with whom could we negotiate the major lines of an "absorption" policy? For we were resolved that it was to be "participatory". Of course we were in total command and fully responsible, but still we would consult with their leaders, discuss unexpected complications and work out mutually agreeable solutions. But who were their leaders?

A brilliant young American who had studied Ethiopian history (and could even read medieval-religious Ge'ez) warned us that we were in "a process of community restructuring". Did that mean that the oldsters who had authority back home in "the old country" were giving way to some new élite? Don't make the mistake of the British colonialists in Africa, our Professor Steven Kaplan warned. They had been naive and misguided when they assumed that their policy of "indirect rule" could function through an accepted traditional leadership of local paramount chieftains. The French colonialists, they couldn't care less (Paris just loved power), and they ruled directly and "assimilated" as

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they went along. So the pragmatic British were frequently forced to create "traditional" rulers where none had existed previously! . . .

Thus, in our turn, we were forced, if tardily, to face such questions. But, as Ben Gurion used to say, the Jews tend to come too late but, God willing, just in time. . . . Who exactly were the priests whom the Falashas called the *qesotch*, and were they the ones to whom we should talk about the thorny rabbinical issues of marriage, divorce, funerals and births? How important was it that during the 17th-century reign of Emperor Susenyos the so-called *Beta Israel* had enjoyed a considerable degree of political autonomy and had even been capable of raising a grand army that challenged for a long time the Christian rulers of Ethiopia? Then, obviously, the Jewish community had centralised power structures, though today there seemed to be only loosely-connected villages. And what about that astonishing phenomenon of Falasha monasticism? Were there really *Jewish monks*? Evidently they did play a vital role. Dr Kaplan taught us some history. The documents attested to monastic orders, withdrawn "into the woods" in order to ensure survival during the years of the Imperial slaughter.[4]

So what conclusions could we draw from the fact that nearly all the figures commemorated by the *Beta Israel* Falashas as holy men at their holy places in Ethiopia were monks? Once the monastic clergy had a paramount position. And today? Well, it suggested that the priests, the *qesotch*, were not necessarily the men in authority. One Christian missionary wrote a book about *The Falashas of Abyssinia* (London, 1869) and found a monk named Abba Simeon to be in charge. Yet Joseph Halévy, when he travelled to Ethiopia (on his historic mission on behalf of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*) found things more decentralised. And by the time Baron Edmond de Rothschild turned up in 1905 there is no mention of monks at all. Who ran the community? The first onset of outside Western help (Faitlovitch and his schools, etc.) created new men of influence; and so did, later, the American contacts and the diplomatic visitors from Israel.

All right, we had to take a fresh look at who-runs-what and who-speaks-for-whom, and to reconsider all the factors of status and power, of wealth (for there were middle classes in some towns) and education (especially among the younger generation after the overthrow of the Emperor Haile Selassie).

Are we getting lost in history? Well, politicians tend to respond to present urgencies in the here-and-now. A backward glance at the past can help to illuminate. Especially when in all other respects we were dealing in the dark. We were utterly dependent on those who could translate for us from the Amharic. Who knows whether they were getting everything right? Who can say that every word from the Hebrew—and, when the Chief Rabbis began to pronounce, the theological vocabulary became delicate, if not tricky!—was being precisely rendered.

I am myself convinced that some of the awful quarrels were probably terminological. Even that some of the mistranslations were not quite accidental. For example, there was general Falasha revulsion when the Rabbinate suggested that the whole community would become "full Jews" only when the symbolic ritual of "reimmersion" (*tevila*) was gone through. Now, I know only a dozen words of Amharic, and as a "secularist" I know next to nothing about *mikvah* baths. But what word was used when the young and headstrong Amharic translators (younger men, enjoying their new power and centrality) told them of the required "reimmersion"?

If it was—and I suspect it wasn't—the normal, usual word for the ritual bathing which the Falashas performed in their village rivers each week for a millennium, then there might well have been no trouble at all. But if the word sounded like, or signified, "baptism"—then all hell would break loose in the promised land, and it did.

"Did we resist", one young Falasha exploded to me, "for a thousand years all Christian attempts to convert us, 'sprinkle water' on us, only to arrive in Zion and get put to the baptismal font by Rabbis who could not even get their wayward flock to observe the holy Sabbath throughout the land? . . ."

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[4] See Steven Kaplan, "Histoire et tradition: les chefs des communautés Béta Israel et leur évolution", in *Les Temps modernes* (Paris, January 1986), pp. 80-100 (from an interview).

> "Aba Savra was the first *malökse* (monk). . . . He organised the order because the Christians were slaughtering our people, our priests, although we had many weapons at that time. Those priests who survived, fled into the woods to save themselves and their people. Aba Savra travelled around to encourage the people and to urge them to unite. His pupil Täga Amlak became his successor. . . . He resisted; he was a real *nazir*, someone who leaves his village, his family, and abstains from meat and wine, after having received a call from Heaven. He goes to the woods or to a deserted place to think, to pray and to prepare himself. After that he returns, to defend his belief. The *managn* is someone who fights back when attacked, he fights for God and for the religion of his people. When he dies he is a hero, a martyr. The *malökse* is not at all like that: he is not a fighter and does not die as a martyr. He is more contemplative. He does not marry, stays a *malökse* all his life, because his oath (to God) is forever. . . ."

See also Steven Kaplan, *The Monastic Holy Man and the Christianization of Early Solomonic Ethiopia (1984)*.

NO, I WOULD NOT WANT to disillusion you, only to suggest how we—and the sooner, the better—have shed our own illusions, misconceptions, bottomless ignorance.

Take the case of the grand old man of Ethiopian Jewry, Yona Bogale. He was born in the heart of that area, Gondar, where most of our Ethiopian Jews come from. That good man Dr Faitlovich befriended him, and enabled him to study in Jerusalem and Paris, and even in Germany. He made his way to high positions in the Imperial Civil Service. By the 1970s, and the beginning of the Falasha emigration to Israel, he was a well-known international figure and the "beloved president". Well, then, was he the "leader" we had to listen to?

How simple-minded we are if we think that only our modern politics produces fractions and factions, and dark intrigue in the corridors of power! There are such "corridors" even between dusty grass-and-mud huts of quarrelsome

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village elders. Think of the years of disruption among the Falashas when substantial sums of aid began to arrive from the outside world in the 1960s and '70s. Abba Uri begins to quarrel with Yona Bogale about "discrimination" in the distribution of funds. Religious leaders challenge political leaders. Amharic *kohanim* deny that the Tigrean *Beta Israel* is being neglected. And the Tigrean elders knew why they were being left out: because they had once, a long time ago—it was 1862—followed a prophetic inspiration and set out on a march to the Promised Land. They didn't get very far, and settled in Tigre, with their communities taking on somewhat different forms and customs. They even took to speaking Tigrinya, rather than Amharic. So when you ask Yona Bogale about the Tigrean Jews (some 4,000), he tends vastly to underestimate their numbers. They were only "a handful", rather unimportant, and probably (somebody charged) not even "really" Jews. . . !

Now we were well into the snake-pit of primitive power-politics, not so different (I agree) from life in our own dear Knesset. You can imagine the horrific delicacy of a secret intelligence enterprise like *Operation Moses* trying to pick and choose, in the dark of night, whom to fly out in the Belgian charter airplanes as if on pilgrimage to Mecca, when village spake not to village and priests prevaricated!

The lessons? Well, Kaplan insists that the creation of "straw chiefs" has no better prospects for success in Israel than it did in colonial Africa. Read his various papers and memoranda for us. His thesis represents, at least in my view, historical wisdom: "While the emergence of a single body representing the *Beta Israel* is perhaps desirable and inevitable, attempts to impose such unity on the basis of spurious traditions or other considerations are generally misguided. . . ." History throws a long shadow, but in the changing light the shades move and alter. Nothing remains truly unchanged for a thousand years. So let's not denigrate the present nor idealise the past.

I know you'll hate the phrase, but we're in "an ongoing process", and so the lessons are varied and complex. . . . Still, in the phrase of your poet, we are no longer on "a darkling plain", just a bunch of ignoramuses clashing by night. . . .

A Cultural Anthropologist in Herzliya

I DON'T HAPPEN TO believe that philosophers should be kings. It would bring, I tell you, the royal line (as in Plato's experiment in Syracuse) to a quick and untimely end. So why should it surprise you that I think the role of social scientists in a community crisis like the immigration of the Ethiopian Falashas should be limited and modest? No one knows, with any reliability, what *they* think—all of them? a majority? a few "representative" figures? Nobody even knows who all of them are, where they come from, and even what they are properly called—which depends on which of their close kinsmen are still alive: still back in an Ethiopian village, waiting for another plane? or perhaps in another Israeli absorption centre under a changed, unrecognisable name? . . .

A know-it-all pretentiousness has always been the plague of upstart expertise. I certainly believe that we can help by providing some knowledge and illumination; otherwise I wouldn't be trying. But we too are part of the problem, and not here with the solution. Very often the difficulties we are enduring are as much due to our own anthropology, the customs and mores of the "native" Israelis, as to the culture-patterns of the strangers who, even in their estrangement, want so much to mix and mingle in Zion. . . .

You mention the great spirits of the discipline—Lévi-Strauss, Malinowski, Franz Boas. But would they have been of any help in this renewed clash of the old and the new, of tradition and change? Malinowski's pupil, Jomo Kenyatta, wrote a London dissertation in which he justified every old primitive practice of the Kikuyu tribe (including female circumcision with rusty razor-blades). Margaret Mead would probably have done a "field trip" or two, listening more to her own rhetorical questions than to the native answers, and would have come up with a typical, predictable, progressive fairy-tale. As for Lévi-Strauss, he would have hated it all, yet another tale of "*tristes tropiques*" in which, again, sinister (even if well-meaning) intruders corrupt and destroy the structuralist harmonies of an ancient integral community. . . .

THE BEST WE CAN DO is to make available some ethnological data which go beyond the obvious urgencies of comprehending the Falashas' religious practices. Neither the Rabbis nor the social workers seem to be getting along as well as they might. As I say, "social science" is not what we have to offer. . . . Have you spoken to Dr Harris? Well, as a Surgeon-General he is a very good example of how military science and medical science can deliver their goods. The thousands arrived; he organised *en masse* their careful and precise medical examinations. Before long, most of the problems of illness and disease, from malaria to cholera, were under control. Tropical parasites took a little longer than tuberculosis. But even TB was not easy, when you think that Dr Harris hadn't seen a case in over 30 years and had to phone his friend, some Admiral at Washington's Walter Reed Hospital, to fly over a box of the latest antibiotics. . . .

All we can hope to inject is a little knowledge about the Ethiopian Jew's mental make-up, that cultural complex which determines his puzzling behaviour. I mean the thoughts, assumptions, axioms and perspectives on human nature (and the universe) he brought with him when he stepped on—and, a few hours (and centuries) later, off—that unimaginable flying machine. . . .

The question, for example, which has come up a thousand times in the last half-dozen years (and it may never go away, time-bound as we are) is the matter of punctuality, the prom-

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ise to show up on-the-dot as arranged. Office workers are irritated, employers in despair, and the many would-be Israeli friends bewildered by the unsociability of unhonoured invitations to visit, to come by for a meal.

Well, you ought to listen to the account given by Dr Chaim Rosen (an impeccably trained anthropologist: University of Chicago with Edward Shils, Donald Levine *et al.*) as he goes up and down the country trying to shed some light on, say, the concept of *chawa*. What an Ethiopian considers to be respectable, polite, and genteel behaviour is a mark of what is referred to in Amharic as being *chawa*, or "well-born".

> ". . . A *chawa* person makes great efforts to be restrained and reserved, to be respectful in all situations and to be soft-spoken. In regard to invitations, he has been trained to respond with politeness. One aspect of politeness in this context is to say 'yes', in order to please the invitor. A forward-sounding 'no' would be considered very rude behaviour. For the Ethiopian, the present moment's demand to be agreeable overweighs any future considerations of not wishing to come, or even of having conflicting plans. . . ."[5]

More than that, an Ethiopian generally doesn't take too seriously any requests that are stated simply and directly. I've been struck by how a first invitation, even for a cup of coffee, is looked at as a sort of formality, and is seldom taken up. Nor, for that matter, is a second request. *Three* times—now we're getting closer to *chawa*! . . .

Rosen and I, and the rest of us, can only conclude that the person being invited probably feels embarrassed. He is not used to people who are not his relatives inviting him to their homes. Then, too, having occupied a kind of outcast (or pariah) status in Ethiopia, they are plagued by "self-consciousness". Most of these people only recently left their villages, and non-Ethiopians such as Israelis still tend to be considered *faranjis*, the Amharic term for all foreigners.

We suspect that even more than politeness, than embarrassment and even suspicion, is involved here. For, after all, the Ethiopians come from a milieu in which relationships tend to be organised around hierarchical or authoritarian principles—very far indeed from the society of free-and-equal levellers we have been creating here! In Ethiopia the easiest way to get results is to issue an order; and, coming from positions of respect and authority, it is assured of being carried out quickly and obediently. Where there is equal status the relationship tends to be rough and strifeful. Now, if you are attuned to fine gradations of rank and status in your own context, small wonder that you are at a loss when faced with a social scene filled with "equals", calling themselves guides and helpers and friends. Each is trying, in some almost inexplicable spirit of Zionist solidarity, to offer him an opportunity to make his own choice. He probably made a personal choice of his own only once before in his life—when, in stress and mortal danger, he joined the long march to Sudan to board an aircraft to Israel. Accept a "friendly" invitation? What do they really expect of him? If he accepts, won't others resent him and be jealous of his apparently privileged relationship? . . . Rosen notes too that in Ethiopia one could see villagers who would sit facing a wall, heads covered by their togas, while they were eating. Small wonder, again, that your village Ethiopian, so wary about eating in public places, fails to turn up for dinner at eight! . . .

ONE OTHER EXAMPLE. Neither clerks nor computers can quite cope with the names of these people. First names become second names, and then new names get substituted or added on. Floppy discs wilt in the heat as registries get corrected, updated, set (provisionally) right. Let me quote Dr Chaim Rosen again, who has been trying valiantly to put us (anthropologically) straight on the subject:

> "The basic principle involved in the Ethiopian case is that a person, both male and female, is known by his or her given first name along with the father's *first* name, which is taken to be each person's *second* name. The father's second name, which was his father's first name, is not handed down. Therefore it is an error to address or refer to an Ethiopian by his second name. That is not him, but rather his father. So any male, whose name may be Tesfaye Yitzak, must be called Ato—this is the Ethiopian equivalent of 'Mr.', as well as a marker of respect to be used when addressing all but the most intimate of friends or relatives—Ato Tesfaye. If he were to be called Ato Yitzak, this would in effect deny his existence, since this is the name of his father. . . ."

Rosen has had to draw diagrams on blackboards to make this clear to all of us; and we tried to follow the chalk lines of male descent and females in marriage (and divorce). Let me summarise the scenario as he presents it, for if ever there was an "identity crisis" it's this one!

TESFAYE steps off the plane in Israel. He is asked for his name, and he replies. He says "Tesfaye Yitzak". Now obviously Yitzak is not an adequate surname for keeping proper family records in the Israeli official registry of citizens, so a new system was devised whereby he was then asked for his father's father's name. Thus he was assigned a new surname: his father's father's first name: Abebe. Henceforth, it was planned, all the children of Yitzak would have the name of his grandfather for their surname.

What about "Tesfaye"? The old name was discussed. Wouldn't it—and many long-time Ethiopian residents agreed—really and truly be better or, at least, easier for Israelis to relate to Ethiopians if they had a Hebrew name? What did "Tesfaye" mean in Amharic? It meant hope. Not a useful male name; and anyway the Hebrew equivalent, Tikva, is not quite appropriate. So he is given another name

[5] Quoted from Dr Chaim Rosen, "Encountering the Ethiopian Jews: Questions of Culture and Behaviour" (December 1985). See also a number of his other very incisive (and, as yet, unpublished) papers: "Core Symbols of Ethiopian Identity" (February 1985) and "Conversations with the Beta Israel: The Dialectic of Interaction between Ethiopian and Israeli Jews" (August 1985).

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altogether—Yosef. Thus, on the official records he is Yosef Abebe. Is it any mystery for you now about the problem of "divided families" and the search for relatives that is still going on? When other members of his immediate family arrived, how long would it take to find a long-lost brother?

But we're not through yet—wait a moment. When Yosef Abebe notes the local custom of addressing people by their surname (with or without the use of Mr) he doesn't want to lose his identity altogether, so he takes to introducing himself as Abebe Yosef. He hopes then he might be called Yosef, his new first name. In the meantime most of his Ethiopian friends continue to call him Tesfaye. . . . Time passes, and Yosef's father, Yitzak, passes away. Yosef decides he would like to take back his father's name. Which he does. He begins to call himself Yosef Yitzak, emphasising the filial connection with a gold chain around his neck, engraved YITZAK. What should an Israeli now make of this? It's not unusual to wear name chains (Shimon, Yaël . . .) and it's assumed that it refers to his first name. So Tesfaye became Yosef became Yitzak. . . .

I MYSELF AM persuaded that, for one reason or another, the Falashas have accepted the name of the game in rather good stead. It may well be part of the fate of the Jews. Who called my uncle "cat's elbows" (*Katzenellenbogen*) or your grandfather "black forest" (*Chernilowsky*)? Maybe we were all made in G-d's image of unnameability? Anyway our friend Rosen (*sic*) thinks that they have taken all these shuffles in the original cards of identity with good grace; and he feels that this flexibility augurs rather well for other sorts of changes that the Ethiopians are being urged to make for themselves in their new homeland.

You want to know about women's names? Don't ask me. I can't draw you the diagram. So far as I can make out, the Ethiopian woman does not change her name at the time of her marriage—remaining all of her life with her original second name, which is of course her father's first name. This gave her, despite a generally inferior status, an equal inheritance right along with her brothers. So what happens in Israel to Tesfaye's wife, Awatash? She becomes Rachel, officially Rachel Abebe, but called sometimes Rachel Yitzak or Rachel Yosef. . . .

You think this is turning Western women's lib on its head? Well, why not? Your "liberated" woman likes to retain her "maiden" name on marriage. But here, the shift of any Ethiopian woman to her husband's name—new or old, or whatever—indicates the *new rights* she has! Losing or gaining or changing a name, it's all process and paradox—with all the ironies of what little we know, deep down, about personhood and identity. . . .

A Student of Languages

ONE THING I THINK I CAN assure you of—there will be no problem about the "Ethiopian accent" in Hebrew so far as Israeli public life is concerned. The accents of immigrants have always been a difficulty in the process of assimilation, although sometimes it has been exacerbated—or maybe it was relieved?—by becoming a subject of comic fun. Does anybody still remember Stepin Fetchit in Hollywood or Amos 'n Andy on coast-to-coast New York radio? Did Peter Sellers's famous turn with the Indian accent help or hurt? or did it lead to the "viciousness" of Alf Garnett, hating every mispronunciation and even the very lilt? In America you will recall the experiences of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N, but there the wit and wisdom of Leo Rosten (alias Leonard Q. Ross) made it a lighthearted and uplifting spoof.

The "Ethiopian accent" may be coming into Israeli speech at a most favourable time, since our Hebrew language is going through such a crisis that it may hardly be noticed at all! . . .

The other day one of our parliamentary reporters was recalling the old days when every Israeli Cabinet used to contain one Sephardi Minister and no more. (Either Bechor Sehitrit or, later, Moshe Toledano.) Even in Golda Meir's 1969 government there was only one (Shlomo Hillel). Since then the Ashkenazi dominance, the men of the East-European Zionist emigration, mostly "Poles" or "Russians", has greatly given way to the great second wave of immigrants to Israel—the "Sephardim", after the historic Iberian wing of the Jewish diaspora and now denoting the millions from Yemenite and North African communities. Two deputy Prime Ministers are Sephardim (Yitzhak Navon and David Levy). So are four other Cabinet Ministers as well as the Knesset Speaker and the Army Chief-of-Staff (Moshe Levy). . . .

No, I don't keep a little list of everybody's origins. I just want to assure you that the gap is narrowing, and that the distinction has ceased to be meaningful. Nobody really pays any particular attention to the kinship groups In the case of the Ethiopians there is, of course, the additional "special" factor of colour. But in the matter of speech they, too, will be part of the current process of assimilating to the third and basic prototype group: the *sabras*.

In those early Parliaments—you ought to speak to David Krivine (the *Jerusalem Post*'s veteran political correspondent) on the subject—you could always close your eyes and tell where a speaker came from just by listening to him. As Shaw's Professor Higgins would not have put it, "accent-wise" the list would look like this. Ben Gurion—"Yiddish-Hebrew". Moshe Sharett—"Russian-Hebrew". Pinhas Rosen—"German-Hebrew". Golda Meir—"Yankee-Hebrew". Abba Eban—"Oxford-Hebrew". In those days the

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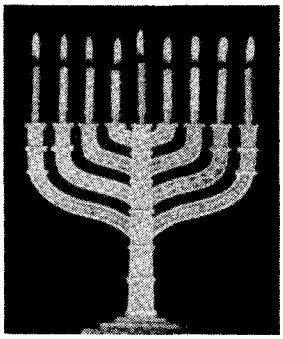
Sephardim were clearly identifiable, for they were perhaps the only ones to speak Hebrew-Hebrew! . . .

Today, I would agree with Krivine that most Knesset members speak not Hebrew-Hebrew but *Sabra*-Hebrew—even, to an increasing extent, the Sephardim, as the new born-in-Israel generations take over everywhere. One friend of mine clasps his hands over his ears when his children talk. For him the *sabra* accent is "just wrong". It's "harsh, guttural, a distortion of the true language"! . . . To be sure, men like Navon, of the older generation, still retain their impeccable pronounciation; but the distinction is fading fast. More's the pity!

So, when the Ethiopian *sabra* generation comes along, at least their speech will have become fully "absorbed". Our national language has become standardised, even if it has been flattened out in the process. Some semantic utopians are calling for the Language Academy to set up an "elocution" section. But when did language reformers ever score a real victory? General de Gaulle couldn't stop *Franglais*; the BBC accent is in chaos; the vocabulary gap between East German and West German is widening; and Burchfield of the *Oxford English Dictionary* says that one day, not too far away, America and England will be divided by separate languages. . . .

So maybe we shouldn't be wailing at the wall of our own tower of Babylon. Mishmash in accents can have its social rewards—at least on the level of speech, the "ethnicity" problem is resolved. . . .

An Ethiopian Falasha from Gondar



Let me warn you right from the beginning—don't take me for typical, and nothing I say should lead you to large or easy generalisations. . . . There, you see it already! How many of our people put the problem in this way? My spirit is, I suppose, already "Europeanised", full of Western turns, far from our Falasha traditions. With you I will talk the English I have learned; with my Israeli friends Hebrew; and of course I still write and broadcast Amharic for the Ethiopian community here and abroad. I am afraid that sometimes it means I am saying three different things, maybe having three different attitudes, none of which my father and my brothers would understand. . . .

You see, I arrived fairly early on, although with the recent *Operation Moses* airlifts almost the whole of my family is here now. I had been the only one among eight children who had any kind of real schooling. It could be that I wanted more than the others to "study", although I certainly had no idea of what studying meant. A vague yearning to learn? possibly an obsession to discover something new and different? Anyway I left the *tukul*, the grass-and-mud hut of my ancestors, and through one bit of deviousness and another I passed myself off as a Christian and found a boarding place as a pupil in Gondar.

Each Sunday I would be given my special dietary foods for the week, and then I ran most of the 15 miles back to school. Friday afternoons I would run back—and first of all, naturally, to the village stream into which I plunged myself for the ritual cleansing, the water washing me clean from the regrettable impurities of the week. . . . One day a miraculous opportunity presented itself, and some visiting Israeli committee chose me to spend "next year in Jerusalem". How could my father refuse? This was the dream of millennia. I went, and apart from a few moments of crisis never looked back.

What crises? Well, the first was really only a brief moment, the moment of arrival in the "promised land". I had not been able to eat the food *en route*; nobody understood a word I said; I was excited and anxious. Then first thing I knew a large, white, blonde-haired woman came up to me and said "*Shalom*, Abebe!" I wanted to run away and hide. Why did she take me by the hand and hold me? and how did she know my name? It was my first lesson: the new realities would be mysterious and powerful. I would have to live by these realities, and not by my expectations and ancient dreams. . . .

Where was the land overflowing with milk and honey? The elders thought we would be able now to pray all day long at the wall of Jerusalem and be covered in white prayer-shawls. Who knows how much simple childishness went into our dream of the return, God willing, to the holy land of King Solomon's golden Temple? I tried to understand what had happened to the Sabbath in Israel, and failed. For us, for a thousand years, it had been a day of peace and quiet and meditativeness. How could Jews be so *busy*, make so much *noise*, laugh and play and *do* things? Had we been deceived by the Bible, or had we misread God's words? I was bewildered, and could have tried to run all the way back. . . .

You call it the struggle with the "reality principle"? Well, it won out in the end, even after the worst crisis of all. Those were the days when the theological discussions were raging in Orthodox circles on whether we were really and truly Jews, whether our "fragmentary" Judaism and our utter isolation in a Black Christian community had not diluted the purities of the Tribe of Dan, even if it were accepted that we were indeed lost wanderers from ancient Judah.

The matter of "immersion" was untroublesome. No doubt some of my brethren misunderstood it to be some kind of "baptism"! Who knows what interpreters' errors clouded the discussion, when no available dictionary could help Amharic-Hebrew translation, not to mention renderings from the Ge'ez? I would have preferred the familiar ritual ablutions, taking the plunge into a stream, as in days of old. But a *mikvah* it had to be, and so I went along and it was over and done with. . . .

The matter of circumcision was rather more devastating. It

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was only supposed to be "symbolic", with a drop of blood from the penis to reaffirm what had been done in "darkest Africa" by who knows what kind of religious witch-doctor. I let it happen. Nobody talked to me, nobody explained. I felt humiliated, outraged, desolated. If I'd known the way to the airport I'd have raced on to the runway and tried to fly home. I packed a few things and took off in some direction. An Israeli couple stopped on the highway and offered me a ride. I took it, and blurted out in my still-broken Hebrew the misery of a Jewish stranger in the promised land. They listened with sympathy. I was astonished that they should be criticising their own Rabbis!

I was consoled by their reassurances that things would change, become more enlightened. They even apologised. And they added that a people which had gone through so much suffering could not always be expected to be understanding and tolerant.

Suffering? What *suffering*? *I* was the one who had suffered!

I stayed with them that night; and the next day they took me to the local library and showed me a film—about Auschwitz. I had heard vaguely about the European war, and knew that there had been casualties. But this was a . . . holocaust.

The lesson was not lost on me. Only yesterday we didn't even know that there were "white Falashas" in the world. Now the past was coming alive, with all its dead. . . . What had pained me? a wound in my personal pride? Yet nothing is more painful for a Jew than to become aware for the first time of the whole history of his people.

My personal crises have become passing anecdotes. There are, believe me, more important things. . . .

WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT? For me personally the immemorial line of tradition . . . the connection with generations past and yet unborn . . . yes, "the great chain of being". I frankly admit to you, I am no longer religious the way I was as a Falasha; I don't know why, but that's how it happened. I don't even observe—this is Friday evening, you know!—the sacredness of the Sabbath. But I often think of the prophetic tradition which warms our lives, and the passage which is really the opening and closing anthem of our people, in our Jerusalem broadcasts, at home and abroad:

> "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the L-rd will set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, that shall remain from Assyria and from Egypt and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the dispersed of Israel and gather together the scattered of Judah from the four corners of the earth."
>
> *Isaiah 11:11-12*

Strangers in the promised land? No way.

Aftermath

Now we are safe at last, to sit
in this garden protected by a hedge,
each corner tree like a soldier
guarding our father's property:
the carefully-tended lawn;
a pebble path leads to the cottage;
within, the kitchen, full pantry.

Though we feel safe, look back.
It's not so far away, so long ago
she kept us in her hut:
you in the barbed-wire coop;
me by the scorched hearthstone
sweeping, cooking at her command,
feeding you greasy bread and potatoes
to fatten you for her oven.

Oh Hansel, I'm afraid again.
Though we poked a dry stick
instead of your finger between her bars,
she knows we are no longer starved.
Spying through fieldglasses
she envies us our sensuous bodies
sporting at their ease in father's yard.
Some day her dogs will track us down.
The furnace is ready, mouth open wide,
and her fire still rages for us, rages.

Florence Elon

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LETTERS

News from Greeneland

TO ADD TO THE PENDULUM swings of "The View from Greeneland" which Leopold Labedz recorded (ENCOUNTER, January 1986), I should like to call your attention to the following item from *The Observer* (7 September 1986). It is more of the same, and it would have been funnier if only it weren't so sad.

> "Novelist Graham Greene, 81, achieved a lifetime's ambition when he arrived in Moscow last week at the invitation of the Soviet Writers' Union [*writes Martin Bailey*]. Greene, who served in MI6 during World War II, always used to explain his membership of the Communist Party in the 1930s by saying he joined 'in the hope of getting a free trip to Moscow.' Later, he criticised the lack of freedom in the Soviet Union and 12 years ago called on writers to boycott the country and turn Moscow into 'a literary ghetto'."
>
> His attitude has now mellowed and he will spend the next fortnight in Russia as an honoured guest."

And honoured guest he was, recipient of courtesies and compliments. The Soviet cosmonaut, Georgy Grechko, told Greene publicly that he was a passionate reader of the novels, that he had learnt English by reading them, and that one of Greene's books (*Our Man in Havana*) had even been in space! Grechko (to loud applause) gave Greene the actual copy.

As for the "mellowed" opinions of the honoured guest, according to a *Tass* report of 17 September 1986, Graham Greene reassured the audience in the large lecture-hall of the Moscow Faculty of Journalism that he loved Chekhov, Turgenev and Tolstoy; that he believed in the future of the Nicaraguan Revolution now under attack; and that the US attempt to "strangulate the revolution" would fail. He said that he was 'in full accord with the position in the Soviet Union, striving for international détente'. . . ."

Greene "stressed" (according to *Tass* correspondents Valery Kosylev and Ruben Shirinyan) this conviction:

> "I believe that the voice of Mikhail Gorbachev is the voice of reason."

And what about the glories of Soviet literature? What of the voices of culture? Graham Greene confessed that ". . . unfortunately, I am poorly acquainted with Soviet literature." But he wasn't really to blame. After all, little is translated into English. Even worse, it's something of a conspiracy: you couldn't put anything past the literati of the West (capitalist? imperialist? reactionary? hysterical?). As he explained, casting new light on the "literary ghetto" of the English-speaking world:

> ". . . This is because the assessors of new works which are proposed for translation into English are dissidents, who of course are biased against anything that comes out of the Soviet Union."

Down with the dissidents! Conformists of the world unite!

IN *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (10 September 1986) Greene expressed his fulsome thanks for "the warm welcome I have received in the USSR after a too long absence of more than 20 years."

During his visit he tried to appear ideologically without blemish. He even managed to explain away his Catholic faith in an interview which he gave to the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (17 September):

> GREENE: I was and still am a Catholic-agnostic. I take a rational and not emotional attitude towards faith. . . . I have always denied that . . . I am a Catholic writer. There is a great difference between a Catholic writer and a writer who is a Catholic. I do not propagandise the faith, I investigate it. The nearer fascism came to us, and the more it spread all over the world, the more necessary it was to oppose it by building moral obstacles to it in the consciousness of the masses. It is here that I opted for faith. . . . I felt it necessary to make faith the symbol of resistance.
>
> *—Catholic faith?*
>
> GREENE: It is unimportant. Faith as such. . . .

Greene again stressed his enthusiasm for Kim Philby, whom he referred to as:

> ". . . one of the most remarkable people whom fate permitted me to meet and whose figure later inspired my novel *The Human Factor*. Kim Philby, my colleague and compatriot, turned out to be a Soviet intelligence agent. I personally feel a great admiration for him, for the consistency with which he came to his new convictions and defended them in the struggle against fascism."

No doubt a good companion for a Companion of Honour (Greene, CH, is himself somewhat less consistent).

In a profile of Graham Greene, Bryan Appleyard wrote in *The Times* (16 October 1986): "From afar he has preserved his mischievous, mildly subversive relationship with England. . . ." Greene seems to have preserved his enthusiastic relationship with the USSR as well. Also from afar.

DOROTHY PITT-JOHNSON

Oxford

Watson's Marx & Genocide

WHILE AGREEING WITH Milan L. Hauner's answer (March) to George Watson's article with the absurd title "Was Hitler a Marxist?" (December 1984), I feel that I have to add something to his reasoning, as my friend Hauner unfortunately did not deal with the most shocking statement in the Watson diatribe, namely that "Marx, Engels and some of their socialist successors believed in genocide, declared that belief, and held it because they were socialists." Not content with this, he goes on to state that "Marx and Engels publicly declared that whole nations as well as whole classes would have to be exterminated." In his rejoinder George Watson referred to an article by Engels on the Hungarian revolution "openly advocating multiple genocide".

Let me state that neither Marx nor Engels ever "declared" anything of this kind, neither publicly nor privately. The article by Engels which Mr Watson has evidently in mind—Engels devoted many articles to Hungary—was published on 13 January 1849. It closes with the prophecy: "The next world war will cause not only reactionary classes and dynasties, but also entire reactionary peoples, to disappear (*verschwinden*) from the earth. And that too is of advantage." (Mr Watson mistranslates the last word *Vorteil* as "progress".) It is well known that Marx and Engels had the crazy idea that some peoples (the Czechs, the Southern Slavs) are "reactionary" differently from the "progressive" Poles, were "*geschichtslose Nationen*" (nations-without-history) and will not survive, partly as victims of wars, partly as a consequence of more or less voluntary assimilation. But they never advocated or propagated the killing of a single person, let alone of whole translated "progress". The full text of of their *pronunciamentos* is arrant nonsense.

J. W. BRUEGEL

London

THE LAST WORD in Engels's article is "*Fortschritt*", which in my article I translated "progress". The full text of the 1849 article (Marx-Engels, *Werke*, East Berlin, 1961, vol. 6, p. 176) calls

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for the wholesale extermination of backward races. I have earlier discussed that socialist programme for genocide in my book *Politics and Literature in Modern Britain*, showing that it was enthusiastically echoed by English socialists like H. G. Wells and Havelock Ellis, who thought racial purity essential to any socialist utopia; and approvingly referred to by Stalin in his *Foundations of Leninism* in 1924.

Extermination was also commended by the Webbs; and by Bernard Shaw, who in his preface to *On the Rocks* (1933) remarked that "extermination must be put on a scientific basis if it is ever to be carried out humanely and apologetically as well as thoroughly." The play, which appeared during the first year of Hitler's rule, was translated into German in 1934. Shaw calls Hitler's genocidal programme "not practicable"; but he welcomes it on more general grounds:

> "Its discussion familiarizes the idea, and clears the way for practicable suggestions. The extermination of whole races and classes has been not only advocated but actually attempted. The extirpation of the Jew as such figured for a few mad moments in the program of the Nazi party in Germany. The extermination of the peasant is in active progress in Russia, where the extermination of the class of ladies and gentlemen of so-called independent means has already been accomplished. . . ."

Shaw goes on to deride "idiot asylums" in England where the sacredness-of-life principle "still terrifies us into wasting the lives of capable people in preserving the lives of monsters." (The Nazi killing of incurables was to begin in 1939.) Any socialist state, Shaw argued, must ask such questions as "Are you pulling your weight in the social boat?" That is why the Russians rightly created a *Cheka* and *OGPU*, to

> "liquidate persons who could not answer them satisfactorily. The security against the abuse of this power of life and death was that the *Cheka* had no interest in liquidating anybody who could be made publicly useful. . . ."

So "liquidation by the *OGPU* is not punishment: it is only weeding the garden". No wonder *On the Rocks* was approved for an edition into German in 1934.

Socialists have not been fond of quoting such passages from Marx, Engels, Stalin and Shaw in the past half century, though they were once proud to proclaim a belief in extermination; and historians have usually neglected them. But they are highly characteristic of Marxian socialism in its classic phase, for a century and more from the 1840s. Since liberals and conservatives do not advocate genocide in any form or kind, they confirm my principal point in *Politics and Literature*: that genocide is not only an essential fact of Marxism, but a fact highly characteristic of it. It distinguishes it from its historical rivals.

The implications are considerable. International socialism should no longer be considered anti-racialist in word or deed; and the assumption that British socialism has been traditionally anti-racialist, too, will have to be reconsidered. For those open-minded enough to examine Hitler's often-avowed debt to Marxism, there is research to be done.

GEORGE WATSON

St John's College
Cambridge

"Two Hours after Midnight"

I MUST THANK YOU for publishing J.-F. Deniau's excellent report (ENCOUNTER, September-October) on the war in Afghanistan. In this article he quoted one of the resistance fighters, who drew attention to the news black-out imposed by the USSR by methods that, if adopted by South Africa, would long ago have excited the indignation of the world media. Tacit acceptance of this black-out has produced a deafening silence, sharply contrasting with the vociferous protests of self-styled liberals and democrats during the Viet Nam War.

Most of us, who are unconnected with the media, can do little or nothing to remedy this sorry state of affairs and give help to the Mujahiddin. But what we can do is to succour their women and children and the three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan—who form the largest refugee community in the world. It is ironic that, at a time when our charitable instincts were excited by the plight of Marxist Ethiopia, the victims of a Communist invasion elsewhere were virtually forgotten. "Afghan Relief" (P.O. Box 457, London NW2 4BR) is one of the organisations set up to ensure that their sufferings are kept constantly in mind.

ROBERT CECIL

Hambledon
Hants.

Afghanistan "Rebels"?

JEAN-FRANÇOIS DENIAU'S article on Afghanistan is excellent (ENCOUNTER, September-October). But it is a pity you used the word "rebel" prominently on the cover. That's precisely the *Communist* word for the Resistance. It is the Resistance who are fighting to *restore* a legitimate government; "rebels" fight a legitimate government.

You might have included something on the Soviet troops who defect in Afghanistan. We, alone, have covered that story first-hand. Ludmilla Thorne, on our staff, has gone inside Afghanistan four times to interview Soviet troops in Russian. She has helped a number of them secure asylum in the West.

LEONARD R. SUSSMAN
Executive Director

Freedom House
New York

Mishan on Keynes & Walters

MAY I ADD an historical footnote to Walter Eltis's review of Alan Walters's new book (ENCOUNTER, November) if only to reveal the change in economists' conception of the role of the Budget over the last 30 years?

Milton Friedman's 1948 paper, quoted by Eltis, apeared at a time when the Keynesian approach to macro-economics was still in the ascendent. His ideas in the paper had kinship with those to be found in the latter part of Abba Lerner's *Economics of Control* (1944) under the heading of "Functional Finance". Yet these policy frameworks were not regarded at the time as in any way radical, since (among other things) *The General Theory* was directed to counter the old balanced-Budget orthodoxy—at least, under conditions of under-employment and constant money wages—which has now become, once more, the new orthodoxy for many economists.

But what, in the 1940s, was the standard Keynesian prescription? Does it bear out Walters's statement that ". . . the weight of Keynesian Budget advice would be, at least, to turn these corrected surpluses into balance—and perhaps into corrected deficits"? Hardly!

The stability anticipated by Friedman (and others) from a government policy of holding constant both expenditures and tax rates operated strictly through flows. A fall in income and employment would produce a budget deficit; the reverse a budget surplus. True, an inflation does reduce the real value of the National Debt. But this capital gain to the government was not perceived to play any direct part in the Budget's contribution to macro-stabilisation (although the capital loss to the public was thought by some to reduce aggregate consumption—a corrective reaction). As for the reduction in the real value of the interest-payments on the National Debt, this would register simply as an unchanged money expenditure on interest payments at a time when government expenditure on other items rose to keep pace with prices.

Thus the stabilising effect in such models was to be measured by the resulting Budget surplus in money terms: i.e., current tax receipts less current

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government expenditures. Certainly no "correction" of this current surplus (in consequence of the fall in the real value of the national debt) would be deemed appropriate by the earlier Keynesians.

In conclusion, any active Keynesian policy based on the simple model would be in the *opposite* direction to that indicated in Alan Walters's conception of "Keynesian budget advice". For, in the simple model, a fall in income and employment results in a Budget deficit. But this deficit itself acts to check unemployment compared with the alternative of a balanced Budget. Inasmuch as unemployment still prevails, however, an active Keynesian fiscal policy would seek to *increase* the deficit; not to correct it. *Per contra*, (a rise in) inflation results in (a rise in) the budget surplus—which surplus, incidentally, tempts governments falsely to claim economic virtue for their policies. But this surplus may be regarded as an idex of the automatic check exerted on inflation as compared with the alternative of a balanced Budget. Since there is still residual inflation, an active Keynesian fiscal policy would seek to *increase* this current surplus: certainly *not* to reduce it so as to balance the Budget—which is the impression of "Keynesian Budget advice" conveyed by Sir Alan Walters's statement quoted above.

I should add, parenthetically, that the finance of the Budget deficit, of which Walters makes much, never bothered the old school of Keynesians—whenever the deficit was incurred to raise the level of employment. Monetising the deficit was also a move in the right direction. . . .

E. J. MISHAN

London

AUTHORS

Geoffrey Partington taught in grammar and comprehensive schools in England before appointment first as a Headmaster and then as Adviser to a Local Education Authority, and has since 1976 been a Senior Lecturer in the Flinders University of South Australia. He has published in numerous educational journals. His books include *Women Teachers in the Twentieth Century* (1976); *The Idea of an Historical Education* (1980); and *The Treatment of Sex in South Australian Education* (1985). This article is a revised version of a paper presented in Poland earlier this year at a conference on contemporary social and economic theory, held under the auspices of the University of Warsaw.

Allan Luks, executive director of a New York-based institution dealing with health and social issues, is the author of *Will America Sober Up?* (Beacon Press, 1983) and editor of the short story collection *Having Been There* (Scribner's, 1979). His story in this issue is adapted from a novel in progress, *Afraid of Fear*. He writes to us: "I thought I'd drop you a note on how life imitates fiction. In my story the social worker dreams that new ways can be found to combat urban fear. A recent US Justice Department symposium has recommended a dramatically new and different approach: the establishment of a national self-help fellowship for youth in trouble. I have been asked to lead it."

George Urban, until recently Director of Radio Free Europe, graduated from the University of Budapest in 1947 and in 1956 obtained his Ph.D. at the University of London. He served with the BBC from 1948-60 and then as director of university broadcasting and academic consultant for RFE, on whose behalf this conversation was recorded. Among numerous other publications, he has edited *Détente* (1976), *Hazards of Learning* (1977), *Eurocommunism* (1978), *Communist Reformation* (1979) and *Stalinism: Its Impact on Russia and the World* (1982), all published by Maurice Temple Smith. Many of the extended converstions which appear in his books had their first publication in ENCOUNTER.

Pamala Lewis's most recent work is "Cycle for a Centenary", twelve poems commissioned for the D. H. Lawrence Centenary Festival in September 1985.

Tony Lucas's work has appeared in *Ambit, Outposts, New Poetry*, and (among other anthologies) in the 1985 Arvon/*Observer* poetry competition selection. He has just completed a book on poetry and religion, and some of the issues that affect them both.

Arnold Beichman, Senior Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, is co-author of the biography *Yuri Andropov: New Challenge to the West* and of *Herman Wouk: The Novelist as Social Historian* (Transaction Press).

Jean-François Revel writes a regular column for *Le Point* in Paris. His most recent work, *How Democracies Perish*, was published in 1985 by Weidenfeld (London) and Doubleday (New York).

Laurence Kitchin, a drama critic for *The Times* from 1956-62, is the author of *Mid-Century Drama* and *Drama in the Sixties* (Faber, 1960, 1966), which includes an interview with John Gielgud.

Madge Hales's poem is, alas, published posthumously.

John Weightman was until his recent retirement Professor of French at Westfield College, London. He is the author, among other books of *The Triumph of the Avant-Garde* (1973), editor of *Master-Works of the French Cinema* (1974), and translator—with his wife, the late Doreen Weightman—of the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss.

Jeffrey Richards, Senior Lecturer in History at Lancaster University, is the author of *Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in Britain 1930-1939* (Routledge, 1984) and (as co-author) a study of British cinema in World War II, *Britain Can Take It* (Blackwell, 1986). His latest book, *Thorold Dickinson: The Man and his Films*, was published this autumn by Croom Helm.

Michael Billington, drama critic of *The Guardian*, is also a contributor to numerous radio and television arts programmes. Among his books are *The Modern Actor* (1974) and *The Guinness Book of Theatre Facts and Feats* (1986).

Edward Rogerson writes on various aspects of Eastern European culture and history. He is currently researching for a study of the economic reconstruction of post-War Poland.

Melvin J. Lasky's *Utopia and Revolution* (University of Chicago Press, 1976) has recently appeared in a Spanish edition published by the Fondo de Cultura Económica in Mexico.

The winner of the 1986 David Higham prize for a first work of fiction is **Jim Crace** with *Continent* (published by Heinemann). "Electricity", a section from the novel, appeared in ENCOUNTER in February 1985.

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Life & Letters Today

Managua

SANDALISTAS: **For the official in charge of tourism in Nicaragua, the Sandinist revolution and the civil war have meant success. Thousands of Americans, Europeans and Latin Americans say they want to support the Sandinists or to see the Leftist revolution at first-hand. As a result, the Ministry of Tourism has become a thriving element in a troubled economy. 100,000 foreigners visited Nicaragua last year, 40% of them from the United States.**

Airport duty-free shops have developed into a chain of "dollar stores" that did $10 million in business last year.

Cindy Marshall, 28, an Australian who lives in England, said she had a "great, wonderful" time picking coffee for six weeks. "We got the chance to be with Nicaraguan *campesinos* and to see the revolution for ourselves", she said. She paid about $500 for her transportation and expenses.

Many visitors join the US residents in Nicaragua who demonstrate outside the US Embassy every Thursday morning to protest.

There are many long-term tourists who simply hang out in guest houses and restaurants, earning the derogatory nickname (after their footware) "Sandalistas".

LOS ANGELES TIMES

London

"H" FOR HEXPLANATION: *A chartered accountant told the London Bankruptcy Court yesterday how he ran up debts of over £450,000 on a mistress, call-girls, gambling and business deals.*

Mr Adrian Stark, 53, said his downfall began when property prices crashed in the early 1970s. He began drinking heavily, womanising and gambling at casinos.

His mistress's name he refused to reveal in open court, "because it might tarnish her reputation."

Asked by Mr Registrar Dewhurst why £15,627 had been written off under the heading "H", he replied: "That stands for hooker."

"What is hooker?" said Mr Dewhurst.

"It means call-girl or prostitute," replied Mr Stark.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Paris/New York

THOMAS WOLFE: **As usual, returning "home" to New York from my home in Paris plunges me into a serious, if temporary, identity crisis. (Yes, Thomas Mann, you *can* go home again, as long as you call it by another name. But try to find that name.) I realise how my *optique* has changed, along with my vocabulary, which is now studded with foreign words like *optique* and which makes me sound pretentious to my best friends.**

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

GUESSWORK: *A preparatory school headmaster from St Andrews in Fife yesterday defeated 21 other finalists and the most devilish snares of the compilers to win the Collins/"Times" National Crossword Championship.*

Mr Michael Wareham, aged 45, succeeded at his third attempt. His average time for solving each of the four puzzles in yesterday's national final at the Park Lane Hotel was just under 10 minutes.

It had been, Mr Wareham confessed, a close-run thing, and he had been forced to guess the answers to two particularly impenetrable clues: **"Endymion not written in Latin but sung in Scotland"** *and* **"Lace—half a guinea to clear".** *Fortunately, he guessed correctly with the answers* **"Bluebell"** *and* **"guipure".**

THE TIMES

London

LIGHTS OUT: **The words "Christmas lights" have been removed from school examination papers because it was feared they could be racially offensive. Ethnic minority candidates could not "identify" with Christmas, ruled the Secondary Examinations Council, which monitors papers for racism and sexism.**

And it ordered the Midlands Examination Group to use the words "festival lights." The draft science question was about electrical circuits.

Last night Tory MP Peter Bruinvels, a member of the General Synod of the Church of England, said: "We are a Christian community. Everyone in Britain knows what Christmas is. The council has patronised the part of the population it was trying to placate. It has gone too far. It's won the daft stakes."

But Council spokesman Linda Parker said: "We're not saying people won't have heard of Christmas. I've heard of Ramadan, but it would make me pause for thought if I saw it in a paper. . . .

DAILY MAIL

London

ANGLO-AMERICANA: *American listeners to CBS Radio's coverage of the royal wedding were yesterday informed: "The Archbishop of Canterbury has consummated the marriage."*

One ABC reporter looked admiringly at Big Ben and called it the Tower of London.

THE TIMES/DAILY MAIL

Accora

TROPICAL COLD WAR: **The first of 117 Ghanaian teachers in Libya have returned home, a month after Colonel Gadaffi banned the teaching of English in Libyan schools in favour of Russian.**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York City

GRAVE MESSAGE: *Onto the blank screen flashes "Yul Brynner 1920-1985" stark, just like a tombstone or memorial ad.*

The voice-over says, "Ladies and gentlemen, the late Yul Brynner."

And there he is, a cancer victim doing an anti-cigarette spot for the American Cancer Society.

In the footage that was originally taped when he was being interviewed about a year ago on "Good Morning America", the actor says: "I really wanted to make a commercial when I discovered that I was that sick and my time was so limited—to make a commercial that says simply: 'Now that I'm gone, I tell you: Don't smoke! Whatever you do, just don't smoke.'"

NEW YORK TIMES

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Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778), Italian engraver and architect, was renowned for the precision and grandeur of the thousands of images he created of Rome's ancient and modern buildings. Occasionally, however, he digressed from picturing realities to create fantasies of magnificent architectural dreams. The etchings in which he captured these romantic ideas are catalogued in this superb, large-format book by the curator of prints and drawings and senior curator at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Robison has assembled hundreds of these masterpieces of the engraver's art, describing in detail Piranesi's extensive revisions and elucidating the complex printing history relevant to these and to the entire body of Piranesi's work.

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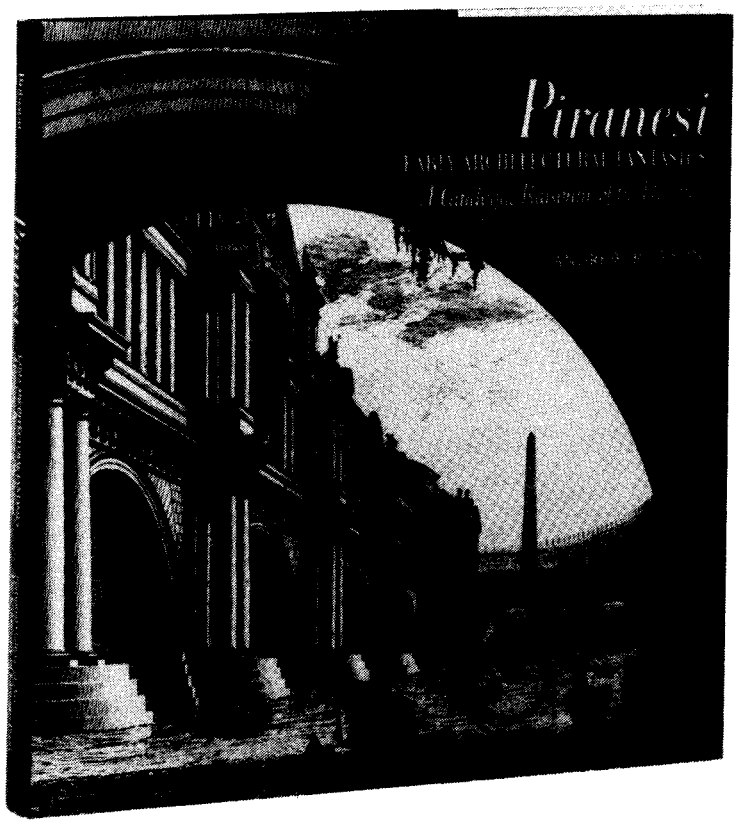

Piranesi

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A Catalogue Raisonné of the Etchings

ANDREW ROBISON

The University of Chicago Press

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